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**From 'Pounding the Pavement' to 'Pushing the Pedal': A
Constable's Perspective of the Detraditionalisation of
Policing in a Small County Borough Police Force, 1947-1968.**

Kevin Rigg

**A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of
the requirements of Teesside University
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

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List of accompanying material

‘South Shields Borough Police’ Oral History Project.

Booklet containing information for participants, frequently asked questions, copyright and consent forms.

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Accessing the official documents of a former police force has not been an easy or straightforward affair. The staff of the South Shields Local Studies Library, and in particular Anne Sharp, allowed me to don a dustcoat and search through unregistered items to find chief constables' annual reports and other documents vital to this study. I am also indebted to the staff of the National Police Library who searched items in their cellar yet to be archived and successfully found South Shields chief constables' annual reports for the years 1965-1967; documents that the National Archives state they do not possess and without which this work would have floundered.

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Author's declaration

I declare that the work contained in this thesis has not been submitted for any other award and that it is all my own work.

Kevin Rigg

Abbreviations

ACPO	Association of Chief Police Officers
AMG	Association of Municipal Corporations
CID	Criminal Investigation Department
HMIC	His / Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary
HMICARs	His / Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary Annual Reports
NARPO	National Association of Retired Police Officers
NECRO	North East Criminal Records Office
PACA	Police Aided Clothing Associations
PETA	Portable Electronic Traffic Analyser
PRDB	Police Research and Development Branch
SSCCARs	South Shields Chief Constable's Annual Reports
TIC	Tyne Improvement Commission
VHF	Very High Frequency

Abstract

Published academic research on the social history of small county borough police forces during the post-war period, in England and Wales, is virtually non-existent. Yet these forces represented a third of the police establishment. Moreover, the period saw the most radical transformation of police practices since the formation of the police. A social characteristic of the period was an increase in individualism and a rejection of traditional authority that occurred in tandem with changes to the economy and a boom in consumerism and technology. Such modification in the way society operated is termed as 'detraditionalisation'. For the first time this research answers the question, 'what was the experience of a constable in a small county borough police force whilst facing the change process brought about by detraditionalisation in society, and changes intrinsic to the police, in the period 1947-1968'.

Using oral history methods to create unique primary data from the testimony of 36 former constables employed in a small county borough police force in the north east of England, this thesis captures their viewpoint of the recruiting process, training and socialisation. It chronicles their recollection of day-to-day duty and captures their experience of significant changes in working practices. It provides a constable's perspective; a 'bottom up' approach.

The problem of recruiting experienced at a national level was not universal. Indoctrination and socialisation of constables into a strong occupational culture nurtured 'easing' activities and ensured a strict hierarchy within peer groups, and the organisation. The job offered limited scope to express individualism. Foot patrol consisted of mundane repetitive duty within an organisation requiring strict conformity where new recruits often struggled to 'fit in'. The introduction of technology and new patrol systems, such as personal radio communication, greater mobility and the unit beat system, increased the demands made of the police rather than reducing them. Generational differences in attitudes and opinions of constables were most apparent at times of change. However, transformations to policing methods together with amalgamation into a larger force led to improved man-management, enhanced career prospects and greater standardisation in procedures.

The working conditions of a small conservative institution, resistant to changing its traditional approach to constables, stifled individualism and enforced conformism. This added to the difficulties of policing a society in the process of modernisation, and in a state of flux. Technology and amalgamation however, paved the way for greater individualism. Detraditionalisation within constables was not a concept welcomed in the small county borough police force.

Introduction

There is a considerable amount of scholarly work published on the social history of policing in nineteenth-century England and Wales, particularly the introduction of the Metropolitan Police in 1829 and the subsequent development of county and borough police forces. However, within decades of the introduction of the 'new police', many policing practices were in need of development due mainly to changes in society and the greater accessibility of technology; particularly in the late nineteenth-century with the introduction of telegraphy and telephony. Such rapid change, fostered by developments in communication and the introduction of motor vehicles, further affected policing in the twentieth-century. The value of such changes to policing was evident in efficiency gains. Yet, there is far less published work on the development of the police in the twentieth century, particularly the post-war period, a time of social upheaval predominated by world war, changes to education and welfare and the development of technology that brought a prospect of nuclear war and the 'space age'. These changes produced transformations to the attitudes and lifestyles of British society; there was a rejection of traditional approaches to lifestyles exemplified by the 'rock and roll' era of the 1950s and the 'swinging sixties'. This then leads to the question of how the police coped within a changing society, of which they themselves were part.

The most radical transformations that were to alter 'traditional' policing practices had their roots in the inter-war period and flourished in the two decades following the Second World War. They involved increased use of technology and the wholesale restructuring of police forces. From 1947-1971, 84 county and borough police forces disappeared when amalgamated into larger neighbouring forces under the auspices of the Police Act 1964; the Act also changed how they were governed, and managed.¹ Many of these forces had been in existence since the mid nineteenth-century and were symbols of civic pride for the local authorities that had administered them

¹ Data from His / Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary Annual Reports years ending 1947 and 1971. London: HMSO. Hereafter HMICAR, followed by year.

since their inception. County forces differed from their borough counterpart not only in the geography of the area policed (mainly rural in the county and urban in the borough) but in their governance. A standing joint committee consisting of councillors and magistrates who relied heavily on the chief constable to manage the force on their behalf oversaw county forces. However, borough forces were directed by watch committees, consisting of local councillors, who were far more involved in the running of their force and where chief constables were generally more compliant, but who nonetheless ruled their force with a rod of iron, holding power of dismissal over officers.

The post-war national economy, following a near decade of austerity, experienced a boom in consumerism in the mid-1950s accompanied by exponential increases in recorded crime rates. This placed pressure on the Home Office, and police, to find more efficient and effective ways to curtail rising crime and incidents. The Home Office response was to move towards greater centralisation with larger, more capable forces less influenced by local authorities and more accountable to the centre. The governance of the urban police changed from one controlled by the watch committee to a tripartite system where the Home Secretary assumed a more central role, the chief constable commanded operational issues, and a new police authority was entrusted to ensure the force was efficient; thus direct local political interference was removed.² To assist in addressing the problems associated with rising crime and incidents, the Home Office also introduced new systems of police operating methods. These included the provision of centralised services to the police; a greater use of mobility; the introduction of new technology; the eventual issue of personal radios replacing the outdated urban constable's mode of communication of telephones placed at strategic positions in police boxes; and the creation of new patrol systems.

In the post-war period, the demands on the British police had grown considerably and made more difficult by a lack of recruits and a high rate of officers leaving prior to retirement age. A solution to fewer officers being available to perform more duties, was delivered by the Home Office in the

² Christopher Blake, Barrie Sheldon, Peter Williams. *Policing and Criminal Justice*. (Exeter: Learning Matters, 2010), 15.

form of unit beat policing; a new patrol system advocating a focus on constables working in teams to produce information and resolve issues in their area.

There was a marked shift in the type of policing offered, from a service oriented police system to one designed to address and reduce rising numbers of incidents and crime rates.³ There was a transformation of operational methods used by foot beat constables with the introduction of technology initiated in response to economic and social changes becoming evident in the community. These included less restrictive legislation on issues such as liquor licensing, gambling and obscenity. The most obvious transformation for the police was the removal of an emphasis on foot patrol and a move to greater reliance on a mobile response. The creation of larger police forces was to lead to the policing of the boroughs being no longer 'small and parochial' but 'large and corporate' and the Home Office was able to exercise far more influence than in the past.

The historiography of policing in the twentieth-century has focused on larger police forces particularly London, Manchester, Birmingham and Liverpool. There is a paucity of academic material on the social history of small borough police forces; consequently, scholars have neglected to address the experiences of the uniformed beat constable in the boroughs. Of the 131 police forces in England and Wales in 1947, 84 employed less than 300 officers and borough police forces had a joint authorised establishment of 20,249 (30 per cent of the total).⁴ In England and Wales 57 forces (43.5%) policed populations less than 120,000, whilst 37 (28.2%) policed populations in excess of 400,000.⁵ Of the smaller populated forces 45 were borough or county borough forces representing over a third of the total; including South

³ David Kynaston. *Austerity Britain 1945-1951*. (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2007), 362-363, illustrates how the police were seen as providing community service including advice and guidance on non-police matters. Michael Banton. *The Policeman in the Community*. (London: Tavistock, 1964) found a similar style of policing in Edinburgh in the early 1960s. Robert Reiner. *The Politics of the Police*. 4th edition. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 91, argues that the service role of policing by the 1970s was given 'lip service' and by 1980 the image of the police was one of primarily being crime fighters.

⁴ HMICAR, 1947.

⁵ HMICAR, 1947.

Shields County Borough Police Force.⁶ This force (chosen as a case study for this research) was a typical small county borough force with an establishment that never exceeded 203.⁷

There are local publications surrounding the development and duties of borough forces, however they are generally 'whiggish', provide a top down perspective, and while offering valuable information, lack the robustness of analytical discussion. Although there are many published works that attempt to capture a holistic account of police history, the amount of research into the social history of policing in the twentieth-century is limited.⁸ There are no social histories combining elements of social, technical and operational change relevant to the constable in a small borough police force, or specific county force, in the post-war period. Whilst there is a prevalence of thematic (mainly criminological) research from the mid-twentieth century into how the police operated, there is a dearth of social history.

Academic research into smaller county borough police forces has been neglected; the approach these forces accepted to policing society have remained on the periphery of most police historians' research, most research being on larger forces. There is therefore an obvious gap in knowledge surrounding how small borough police forces adapted to wider social changes evident in post-war Britain and changes intrinsic to policing. Helping to fill this lacuna is a central aim of this thesis.

There have been scholarly contributions on specific areas of interest to police historians when examining change processes affecting constables in the twentieth-century. They include a study of the policy of recruitment and training in London in Haia Shpaya-Makov's *The Making of a Policeman: A Social History of a Labour Force in Metropolitan London, 1829-1914*. In addition, the study of the behaviour of constables in the period 1900-1939 is the subject of Joanne Klein's *Invisible Men: The Secret Lives of Police*

⁶ A town afforded county borough status was self-sufficient in the provision of services and administration.

⁷ South Shields Chief Constable's Annual Report 1967. Hereafter SSCAR.

⁸ In particular Thomas Critchley. *A History of the Police in England and Wales*. (London: Constable, 1978); Clive Emsley. *The English Police: A Political and Social History*. 2nd edition. (London: Longman, 1996) and *The Great British Bobby*. (London: Quercus, 2009); Philip Rawlings. *Policing A Short History*. (Cullompton: Willan, 2002).

Constables in Liverpool, Manchester and Birmingham, 1900-1939; and the older oral histories of Mike Brogden *On the Mersey Beat*, and Barbara Weinberger's *The Best Police in the World* (both produced over 20 years ago). Brogden and Weinberger jointly provide a police officer's perspective of policing from the inter-war period up to the mid-1960s.⁹ Weinberger's work is notable in that it attempts to provide a holistic account of policing in England; she interviewed respondents from 17 police forces including a series of county and borough forces. However, her work falls short of covering the period of the late 1960s when many of the changes subject to this study were introduced and only briefly includes unit beat policing and the introduction of personal radios.¹⁰

However, a useful basis as a starting point for post-war changes in policing is the work of Roy Ingleton, *The Gentlemen at War: Policing Britain 1939-45*, which depicts a police service that, at the end of the war, enjoyed the respect of a population with whom they had shared harsh experiences.¹¹

The above studies have provided insight into the way constables were recruited, organised, and deployed, as well as their general working conditions. Nevertheless, they do not seek to identify the socialisation process constables experienced nor do they provide any comprehension of policing a small town in a changing society in post-war Britain. The decades following the end of the Second World War represent a key phase for the development of the police who were coming to terms with the rebuilding of a nation in austere economic conditions whilst operating in a transforming society.

The object of this thesis is to contribute to the social history of the police from a hitherto unexamined perspective of the constable who experienced

⁹ Haia Shpaya-Makov. *The Making of a Policeman: A social history of a labour force in metropolitan London, 1829-1914*. (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2002); Joanne Klein. *Invisible Men: The Secret Lives of Police Constables in Liverpool, Manchester, and Birmingham, 1900-1939*. (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2010); Mike Brogden. *On the Mersey Beat*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991); Barbara Weinberger. *The Best Police in the World*. (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1995)

¹⁰ Weinberger, 1995, 43-46, briefly covers the wider introduction of mobile police patrols and unit beat policing.

¹¹ Roy Ingleton. *The Gentlemen at War: Policing Britain 1939-45*. (Maidstone: Cranbourne Publications, 1994).

changes to working practices in a small borough police force. This work contributes to filling the vacuum of police social history during a period of sustained change and for the first time: provides a case study for the way in which national policing transformations evolved locally; identifies elements of detraditionalisation evident in the police and the policing of wider society; and provides a constables' perspective of these issues.

Detraditionalisation is a concept often used in the discourse of sociology to depict changes in social constructions. For example Ian Loader and Aogan Mulcahy provide an in depth review of the position the police held in society in the decades since 1945. They use detraditionalisation as a means to illustrate changes in society from one displaying deference to authority that shifted to resisting traditional norms, challenged traditional institutions, and 'desacralised' the status of the police.¹² Detraditionalisation is therefore marked by society rejecting previous traditional lifestyle choices and modifying them, providing distance from the previous generation's expectations and delivers greater freedom of choice and expression (individualism and agency). However, detraditionalisation is equally applicable to analysing continuity and change within traditional police methods; identifying where practice is replaced or reformed. The concept of detraditionalisation, the emergence of new traditions and the recasting of older ones, make it clear that policing is in a continual state of flux in responding to a changing society.

The main research method used for this research was the use of oral history, encapsulating the life stories of 36 men and women who had worked as constables in a typical small county borough police force. Oral history offered a key research tool in creating primary data to fill a gap in information currently not available from trace sources. However, traditional trace history methods were also employed, including archival searches from local, regional and national sources.

¹² Ian Loader and Aogan Mulcahy. *Policing and the Condition of England*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

There are very few published academic oral histories focusing on the social history of policing in twentieth century Britain; most notable are the works of Brogden and Weinberger. Given the upsurge in the use of oral history, it is striking that these works are already 20 years old. Brogden, in studying Liverpool in the inter-war period, considered: recruitment; methods of patrol; discipline; the constable policing the community; regulating the lower classes; and policing domestic and other disputes.¹³ Weinberger chose a different route attempting to research a national perspective. Whilst she commenced with recruitment further themes she examined were: police patrol; career prospects; policing the motorist; the CID; policewomen; wartime; crime; public order; and police scandals.¹⁴

A new work based on oral testimony is warranted in order to reassess previous work and capture the recollections of a rapidly aging former 'borough' police population. This study follows a dual chronology, more akin to Brogden. Firstly, it captures the experiences of the constable, from the recruiting and application process, being introduced, trained and socialised into the force and having to adapt to the occupational culture of the police. Secondly, it chronicles developments in the practices of the constable because of changes in methods of management, operational policy and technology that affected the level of individualism the constable was able to express. Thirdly, it considers the level of changes brought to bear by processes of detraditionalisation apparent in wider society and within the police itself.

An assessment is provided of the modernisation process that delivered an increasing use of mobility in police patrols, particularly the introduction of unit beat policing. This system, which utilised small teams of constables on foot and in cars, claimed to have been particularly successful in reducing crimes and incidents in Lancashire. The Home Office rapidly encouraged the adoption of the system nationwide. However, unit beat policing was later perceived as being responsible for distancing the police from the public. It has been argued elsewhere that it was poorly implemented, and promoted

¹³ Brogden, 1991.

¹⁴ Weinberger, 1995.

with little research to support it as being as effective as the Home Office, and Lancashire Constabulary, claimed.¹⁵

The first chapter provides a theoretical discussion and framework of key aspects of tradition and detraditionalisation. The main findings of police historiography are outlined along with essential background material identifying key changes in society that influenced policing and its occupational culture.

Chapter two offers an account of the research methodology, how the participants for the oral history project were recruited, and an assessment of the strengths and weakness of the approach taken in the research. It provides a brief critique of history and memory and the way testimony is constructed and composed, a key aspect of the qualitative approach to capturing primary data using oral history methods.

Chapter three places the town of South Shields in the context of the research. It provides a historic socio-economic perspective of the town, its geography and development in the post-war period. A brief history of the town's police force and The River Tyne Police provides a prelude to the provision of a profile of the recruit to the town's police force and identifies changes to recruitment patterns. It recognises variations from recruiting outside the local area in the decades prior to the Second World War, and sees a connection with Shpaya-Makov's theories of recruitment in London.¹⁶

Chapter four examines the police recruitment process. It identifies motivational factors for joining the police and the level of subjectivity involved in the educational and physical restrictions and examinations applied to the applicant. It highlights differences in the local and national perspective of recruiting; it is apparent that the national problem of recruiting to the police was not evident in the north east of England.

Chapter five considers the socialisation process of becoming a constable. It finds common experiences found when undergoing training and early

¹⁵ Mollie Weatheritt. *Innovations in Policing*. (London: Croom Helm, 1986), 88-98.

¹⁶ Shpaya-Makov, 2002, 43, argues that it was the policy of the Metropolitan Police to recruit from outside of their area.

experiences of police work. There is recognition of a dichotomy of supervision that provided harsh discipline in an environment where drinking on duty had an unofficial level of acceptability. It highlights the effect of subjective supervision where decisions made were not always transparent and where having an ability to 'fit in' to a small police force was important to avoid conflict with supervision and peers. It also discusses levels of voluntary and enforced wastage.

Chapter six characterises the detraditionalisation of social issues apparent during urban modernisation. It examines the perceptions and approaches constables had to poverty in the town and how their policing experience changed during the rebuilding and modernisation process that shaped how society operated. There is an emphasis on the detraditionalisation of prostitution and how modernisation removed a certain method of suicide. The nature of the constable's decision-making and the application of informal justice are also examined.

The seventh chapter explores the detraditionalisation of police methods of performing foot patrol with the demise of the police box system and the introduction of the personal radio. The way in which the constables perceived what they were able to achieve with technology (using speed radar meters and personal radios as a case study) and the extent to which these changes influenced the individualism of the constable are considered. It compares the findings of Klein's research that found constables 'loathed' the introduction of the police box, to the introduction of the personal radio.¹⁷ It argues that greater use of technology added to increased demands on the police, rather than reducing it.

Finally, chapter eight examines the detraditionalisation of the beat constable with the introduction of mobility and the unit beat system, the amalgamation of the South Shields County Borough Police Force and the removal of previously accepted practices surrounding the police use of firearms and cliff rescues. Similarly, the level of individualisation these changes brought is

¹⁷ Klein, 2010, 68.

assessed. This final chapter also judges the implementation of the unit beat system against concerns raised by Weatheritt.¹⁸

¹⁸ Weatheritt, 1986, argues that the implementation of unit beat policing was inept.

Chapter 1: A framework for examining the detraditionalisation of the police 1947-1968.

Much debate about policing in Britain by social historians has concentrated on the development of the police and how they relate to society.¹ The complexity of social, political and economic changes in society, has resulted in continuing deliberations surrounding the reasons as to the purpose and motive for having a police force. Police historians and those engaged in police studies, have tended to fall into two models of presenting their stance when considering this question, defined as orthodox or revisionist.²

Orthodox history provides a 'Whiggish', and somewhat conservative approach. It presents the development of policing as one modified in tandem to changes in crime and developments in society and tends to depict police public relations as generally consensual.³ It sees the development of the police as a steady, almost natural response to industrialisation and presents an optimistic, generally uncritical narrative. This orthodox approach is evident in police force publications and more general local history publications. Its approach claims that, because the police were recruited from the working classes, and due to there being routes of democratic and legal liability holding the police to account, policing was based upon consent, not coercion.⁴ In essence, orthodox models can be viewed as 'ideology as history'.⁵

The revisionist approach is more sophisticated. It places class conflict at the heart of police history, and seeks to identify the need for police as a means of maintaining social order. It argues that the masses needed controlling to protect the interests of the bourgeoisie and capitalist system and places

¹ Rawlings, 2002, 106-151.

² Reiner, 2010, 40f, and David Taylor. *The New Police in Nineteenth-Century England*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), 2-10, provide more detailed descriptions of these models.

³ Such works include W. L. Melville Lee. *A History of Police in England*. Republished edition by Kessinger Publishing, 2007. (London: Methuan & Co., 1901); Charles Reith, *A New Study of Police History*. (London: Oliver and Boyd, 1956); Critchley, 1978.

⁴ Reiner, 2010, 46.

⁵ Ibid 47.

emphasis on the elite using the police to control the working classes.⁶ The revisionist model is useful in reminding us that class differences and poverty matters, and that society was not an integrated harmonious unit.⁷ This model argues that the beneficiaries of the new police were the bourgeoisie and that the police were a tool of the dominant class; it refutes that the police were subject to popular control.⁸

However, whilst both models provide useful insight, they can be over simplistic in their approach. All police historians recognise, in contrast to the view of the orthodox model, the emergence of the new police was during a period of acute political conflict.⁹ Policing did not seamlessly improve upon itself; clashes between social interests and social classes cannot be placed into a sole uncritical discourse. Yet, the revisionist model overemphasises the extent of opposition shown by the working classes to the police and the overt role the police had in ensuring political dominance.¹⁰

Whether the police deliver a service providing order and protection, or are a means of ensuring class interests, became a major question for those engaged in police studies.¹¹ Judgement between the models seems to depend upon the mode of interpretation adopted and whilst both have degrees of truth, no one interpretation offers a once-and-for-all means of understanding police development. It is for that reason that many historians recognise “there is not an easy or obvious balance to be struck”.¹² Reiner responds to this problem by adopting a ‘Neo-Reithian-Revisionist Synthesis’ model which seeks to give weight to recognising that policing is rooted in a society divided by class conflict but gives credit to police reformers and the traditions they created.¹³ It is clear that orthodox and revisionist models of interpreting the development of the police do not provide overarching law-like

⁶ Revisionists can be identified by the discussion they engender of the amount of control by the local elite. They include Mike Brogden, his work is of particular interest with the oral histories he published in 1991.

⁷ James Oberklaid and Peter Caterall. *Understanding Post-War British Society*, (London: Routledge, 1994), 1-8.

⁸ Reiner, 2010, 52-55.

⁹ Ibid, 65.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Alan Wright. *Policing: An introduction to concepts and practices*. (Cullompton: Willan, 2002), 6.

¹² Taylor, 1997, 4.

¹³ Reiner, 2010, 65. Charles Reith was a founding orthodox historian.

explanations and a synthesis, or hybrid of the two, provides a common sense approach to ensuring both aspects of police development are considered.¹⁴ This is a move supported by others engaged in police studies and the history of public service institutions.¹⁵ This work also places itself in support of a synthesis of the traditional models.

Researching police social history in the twentieth century

Accessing and locating primary data surrounding the development of the police (particularly for small forces) can be difficult; either because it no longer exists; is unable to be located; or due to its nature (where it contains personal or restricted data).¹⁶ Historians are therefore attracted to making use of accessible archived material, usually from larger corporate police forces.¹⁷ Such data is required to elicit the various aspects of occupational reform; changes that affected the efficiency of the constable; and the struggles of police managers to address changing trends of crime; and modes of living. As a result, the meagre historiography of the police in post-war England and Wales has tended to focus on large city forces and the Metropolitan Police. Research on these larger police organisations has shown that they shared many aspects of police practices and developed similar methods of dealing with policing problems in tandem with other forces, thus presenting a typical image of how a large police force operated.

It is evident, particularly from the 1970s, that “most research has been concerned primarily with immediate policy matter” and has emanated from policy-making bodies, rather than historians.¹⁸ From the mid-1960s research in police studies focused on occupational culture and thematic issues such as domestic violence, drug offences, racism and violent crime. There is far more published work available on policy and criminological issues than there is on social history when considering the study of policing in this period. To

¹⁴ Wright, 24.

¹⁵ See Taylor, 1997, 4; Reiner, 2010, 65; Wright, 10; and John Pierson. *Understanding Social Work: History and Context*. (Maidenhead: Open University Press, 2011), 212.

¹⁶ Martin Stallion, and David S Wall. *The British Police: Forces and Chief Officers 1829-2012*. (Hook: The Police History Society, 2011), 44-45.

¹⁷ The archival materials of some larger forces are stored in police museums and regional archives the records of the Metropolitan Police by the National Archives, thus enabling ease of access. The records of smaller forces have not always been retained. Some are stored in local libraries or county archives who apply strict conditions on their access in respect of personal data on living subjects.

¹⁸ Robert Reiner, *The Politics of the Police*. 3rd edition. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 1.

appreciate the eclectic issues affecting policing in post-war Britain historians need to consider a range of interdisciplinary academic studies, including criminology, sociology, occupational culture, police studies and social history, to understand the complexities involved. The diverse research carried out by other academic disciplines provides material the social historian can use.

To gain an intrinsic understanding of changes that influenced the constable's behaviour, routines, and activities 'their' experiences and opinions need to be considered. To establish the urban constable's routines in Merseyside during the inter-war period, Mike Brogden used oral history, a method of creating primary data, to establish how they interacted with the community, viewed their supervision and considered career prospects.¹⁹ His work (reflective of his stance as a revisionist historian) made a significant contribution to police social history by describing the level of conflict between the police and those they served in inter-war Liverpool.

Barbara Weinberger, again using oral history methods, researched the experience of working as a constable throughout England from the 1930s to the 1960s.²⁰ Her study, which covered experiences from both borough and county forces, illustrated that many aspects of working conditions had not changed significantly from those described by Brogden. However, her work falls short of describing how constables coped with changes to policing brought about by technology, or the process of amalgamation with other forces that occurred in the late 1960s. Her work concludes between the period of the Royal Commission of the Police in 1960 and the introduction of unit beat policing.²¹ Weinberger's research uses a relatively small sample of interviewees to represent a spectrum of police experience over the whole country. Her work extends Brogden's in time scales; it transcends the inter-war period and concludes in the early 1960s. However, it provides a more holistic (although diluted) overview of changes to policing throughout England, and places less emphasis on revisionist theories.

¹⁹ Brogden, 1991.

²⁰ Weinberger, 1995.

Louise Jackson has also provided useful insights into how policewomen's departments emerged and operated as specialist units in the post-war period; whilst coping with internal police-gender conflict.²² Her work includes the oral testimonies of former policewomen and portrays them as delivering specific services to women; children; victims of domestic violence and investigating missing persons; duties performed whilst removed from the mainstay of police patrol performed by men. She adds to the knowledge of police history by describing the development of social workers, probation officers and police during the post-war period, particularly in relation to family issues and domestic violence.

The research of Loader and Mulcahy, utilises a range of oral histories (senior officers, Home Office officials, constables and members of the public) as well as documentary sources to determine how the police from 1945-2000 lost its traditional 'sacred' post-war image.²³ The work is valuable in discussing detraditionalisation in terms of changing attitudes in society towards the police on a broader scale by examining aspects of criminal justice and social change from a variety of personal experiences. However, it does not focus purely on the constable, tends to concentrate on inner-city areas and seeks to examine changes in social constructions brought about by wider aspects of detraditionalisation in society.

Haia Shpayer-Makov and Joanne Klein have published research concentrating on the early to mid-twentieth century working conditions and recruiting methods of the constable.²⁴ Their work identifies policies surrounding recruitment and changing working conditions for the police that help fill a gap in the knowledge of policing in the early twentieth century. Shpayer-Makov outlines the recruitment and training of police recruits, whilst Klein unveils the day-to-day behaviour of police constables and the police reaction to various types of new technology including the police box system. Brogden's, Shpayer-Makov's and Klein's work is located in large cities: London, Liverpool, Manchester and Birmingham.

²² Louise Jackson. *Women Police: Gender Welfare and Surveillance in the Twentieth Century*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006).

²³ Loader and Mulcahy, 2003.

²⁴ Klein, 2010; Haia Shpayer-Makov, 2002.

Whilst published orthodox 'top down' popular histories are useful in providing an insight into how forces changed and developed, they lack the academic robustness of research and fail to capture many of the harsh realities of police work. This is due to some extent to the hidden nature of operational policing which left the door open for official police accounts to be accorded greater credence.²⁵

Tradition, detraditionalisation and continuity

What becomes clear when researching the police in the post-war era is that changes in policing evolved in response to wider changes that occurred in society, and changes intrinsic to the organisation itself (usually following the introduction of central policies). The constable was therefore working in a role, subject to complex and varying pressures, providing a service to a society and organisation in a state of flux (particularly after the 1950s). Constables themselves, as members of society, were subject to these transformations. To clarify the issues that influenced change and how change materialised to alter the working routines of the constable, and his responses to them, this work uses the concept of detraditionalisation to identify the change process in the police. This approach allows a focus on social and occupational changes relevant to the constable and incorporates those changes evident to wider society.

The passage of traditional methods of how police operated provides demarcations in police history. These highlight change when recalled in the personal memories of individuals and are supported by trace documents confirming the change process.²⁶ Such documents include Home Office reports, Acts of Parliament, the reports of chief constables and HMIC, minutes of meetings of watch committees and joint standing committees, who constituted the police authorities. The academic community support the dialogue by the publication of research that seeks to illuminate, analyse and give meaning to

²⁵ Klein, 2010.

²⁶ Traditions of routines along with events that have an intrinsic interest are recognised as good areas for memory recall. Paul Thompson. *The Voice of the Past*. 3rd edition. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 132-133. And Valerie R Yow. *Recording Oral History* 2nd edition. (Oxford: Altamira, 2005), 42-51.

such change processes. The identification of these developments provides opportunities for the historian to explore.

When the change process, identified within police history, is marked by the detraditionalisation of previous practices, habits or customs, it should be recognised that within the transformation from one tradition to another there is also continuity. For example, a change in the way a police officer performs patrol does not alter the fact that he still patrols. Anthony Giddens identifies that there are continuities between the traditional and the modern, and that it can be misleading to contrast the two in “too gross a fashion”.²⁷ He argues that a means by which modification in tradition can be noted is by the “scope of change observed” and by “identifying those institutions that are not found in prior periods”.²⁸ Continuity within change is important when recognising remodelling that occurs in the modernisation process. When discussing issues of detraditionalisation it would be equally beneficial to use the term retraditionalisation, since the uncertainty of change tends to bring with it a desire for the stability of tradition. Detraditionalisation is therefore also retraditionalisation where the old is replaced, reformed or remodelled into the new. The two terms are synonymous with each other.²⁹

Nonetheless, there remains a contrast between the modern and the traditional, between the new and the old, even if the culture or a sense of tradition remains. It seems that tradition can be modified in response to various dilemmas (enforced change) against the background of previous tradition, thus ensuring a sense of continuity.³⁰ Detraditionalisation therefore defines aspects of traditions that are annulled or altered, within a process of continuity.

²⁷ Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity*. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990), 4.

²⁸ Ibid, 6.

²⁹ Barbara Adam. “Detraditionalization and the Certainty of Uncertain Futures.” Chap. 8 in *Detraditionalization*, edited by Paul Heelas, Scot Nash and Paul Morris, 134-148. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 139.

³⁰ Mark Bevir and Ben Krupicka. “Police Reform, Governance and Democracy.” Chap. 6 in *Police Occupational Culture: New Debates and Directions*, edited by Megan O’Neil, Monique Marks and Anne-Marie Singh, 153-179. (Oxford: JAI Press, 2007), 155.

Tradition is also a shared and recognised practice that endures over time and can be identified in terms of how long they have been followed.³¹ Yet, traditional practices can emerge in a short period and where one tradition expires it can be immediately replaced with another. Traditions are not necessarily founded on ancient conventions. For example an individual's experience of an institution, such as being a student at a police training centre, may only last three months but will represent to them their experience of national police training tradition. Similarly, the experience of working in a traditional occupation is formed within boundaries and it is confined to the period of employment. Moreover, changes to traditions that occurred prior to, after, or during an individual's experience may carry greater or lesser influence with other individuals engaged in the same occupation. Changes can represent both individual and collective experience.

The late Eric Hobsbawm argued that overtly accepted rules that seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour or repetition can constitute the 'invention of tradition'.³² Such 'rules' are staple ingredients of initial police training and form the expectations made of constables' behaviour when carrying out duty. He further argues that tradition, usually seen as being rooted in the past, can be formed in recent history and that such changes have been significant in the past 200 years when they respond to innovations of the modern world. Tradition has elements of practice, culture or custom that is passed on. It can be defined as a "set of assumptions that are taken for granted by individuals, as a form of habit, in the conduct of their daily lives and transmitted by them from one generation to the next".³³ Giddens qualifies these assumptions by arguing that individual habits are merely personal forms of routine, unless they evolve into collective habits by influences within a community.³⁴ Timothy Luke identifies tradition as "a set of

³¹ Colin Campbell. "Detraditionalization, Character and the Limits to Agency." Chap.9 in *Detraditionalization*, edited by Paul Heelas, Scot Nash and Paul Morris, 134-148. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 162.

³² Eric Hobsbawm and Terrence Ranger. *The Invention of Tradition*. Canto ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 1-14.

³³ John B Thompson. "Tradition and Self in a Mediated World." Chap. 6 in *Detraditionalization*, edited by Paul Heelas, Scot Nash and Paul Morris, 134-148. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 162.

³⁴ Anthony Giddens, "Living in a Post-Traditional Society." Chap.2 in *Reflexive Modernization*, by Ulrich Beck, Anthony Giddens and Scott Lash, 56-109. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994), 101-102.

conventions, of rules, which regulate cultural and social life".³⁵ He argues that traditions should not be regarded as being static, backward or conservative, but as active and dynamic; they are actively part of everyone's daily life.³⁶ However, crucially to this current study, traditions change when the circumstances in which they relate change. To survive they must be appropriate to the circumstances in which they operate. Therefore if the technology of an occupation changes, the traditions which govern its use also change.³⁷

Following the Second World War a loosening of traditional ties to authority introduced new challenges to the social establishment.³⁸ Abigail Wills argues that the story of the immediate post-war period has become recognised by academics and within popular memory, as providing a clear division between the affluence, tradition and stability of the mid-1950s on the one hand and 1960s rebellion, sexual revolution, and social upheaval on the other.³⁹ These complex social changes resulted in the cultural undermining of police authority making it difficult for the police to appear as the embodiment of a common (moral) community. Significantly, processes of detraditionalisation affected society, the policing of the social world and the police organisation.⁴⁰ Post-war British society was becoming increasingly less deferential and de-subordinate, supporting elements of detraditionalisation within society itself.⁴¹ Detraditionalisation allows for a rethinking of attitudes, the old order becomes less influential and individuals develop their own sense of direction; recognised in social theory as individualism.⁴² This democratising of everyday life led to a lack of trust in social and traditional institutions with less deference being shown to religious belief, or established authority. This was

³⁵ Timothy Luke. "Identity, Meaning and Globalisation: Detraditionalization in Postmodern Space-Time Compression." Chap.7 in *Detraditionalization*, edited by Paul Heelas, Scot Nash and Paul Morris, 109-133. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 111.

³⁶ Ibid, 116.

³⁷ Edward Shils. *Tradition*. (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1981), 258.

³⁸ Louise Westmarland. "Police Cultures." In *Handbook of Policing*, edited by Tim Newburn, 253-280. Cullompton: Willan, 2008.

³⁹ Abigail Wills. "Delinquency, Masculinity and Citizenship in England 1950-1970." *Past and Present* 187, no. 1 (May 2005): 157-187, 159.

⁴⁰ Loader and Mulcahy, 13-14.

⁴¹ Ralph Miliband. "A State of De-Subordination." *The British Journal of Sociology* 29, no. 4 (Dec 1978): 399-409.

⁴² Paul Hopper. *Rebuilding Communities in an Age of Individualism*. (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), 29.

reflected in shifts away from traditional aspects of life such as religious marriage in churches, greater divorce rates, sex outside of marriage and single parenthood.⁴³ The issues of collective human attitude and behaviour were accordingly subject to detraditionalisation.

Nonetheless, this work also adopts a narrower definition of detraditionalisation that focuses upon the methods and routines used by constables to perform their tasks. It takes account of detraditionalisation within society and the way this influenced the relationship between the public and the police, particularly in respect of police tactics. It also recognises changes introduced by the police organisation, and Home Office, to address issues that emerged from societal changes such as rising crime and incident rates, increased ease of communication and mobility.

The use of the word traditional when describing a particular feature creates problems. One has to ask “Traditional to what period?”, “Traditional for whom?” Clarity has to be given to these questions to avoid misleading assumptions. For example, Mike Brogden and Preeti Nijhar argue that proponents of British community policing claim ‘traditional policing’ with its emphasis on reactive crime fighting have failed.⁴⁴ Yet reactive policing was instigated in the late 1960s with the commencement of unit beat policing and its emphasis on reacting to calls from the public. Until then police officers were ‘traditionally’ considered to be proactive in preventing crime whilst patrolling on foot and providing a public service. This illustrates the difficulty in defining ‘the’ traditional police service and locating the more elusive traditional uniformed ‘Bobby’. As Brogden and Nijhar argue, “the good old days never happened. There is no viable older tradition to restore”.⁴⁵

As traditions lose their hold there is inevitability that they should be subject to change, a presumption that something better should replace it.⁴⁶ Inherent to the idea of modernisation is a contrast with tradition, yet new methods and

⁴⁴ Mike Brogden and Preeti Nijhar. *Community Policing: National and international models and approaches*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2010, 27. This is more revealing when considering Brogden had researched a different ‘traditional’ form of policing in Merseyside in the inter-war period.

⁴⁵ Ibid, 70.

⁴⁶ Shils, 1.

systems represent an emerging tradition where the old is detraditionalised into the current - a dynamic process. Tradition is therefore a means of handling time and space, providing the ability to “insert a particular activity or experience into the past, present and future”. Tradition is not static; it is reinvented by each new generation, as it takes over from those preceding it.⁴⁷ Therefore, whilst Brogden and Nijhar’s argument that the good old days ‘never happened’ may be disputed, they are correct in asserting that ‘older traditions cannot be restored’. However, this does not mean that they cannot reveal good practices that can be replicated in a more modern context.

The social, economic and cultural changes evident in post-war Britain were significant. The police organisation, their methods of operation, governance and the equipment they used were replaced in response to new demands, particularly during the 1960s. These transformations were characterised in the police community by changes to: traditional methods of recruitment; patrol; surveillance; communication; mobility and management. There was a distinct shift of emphasis for uniformed constables patrolling a foot beat area, from having a good deal of freedom to decide how they would operate, to being a resource more easily tasked and monitored.

Detraditionalisation is a concept used within this work as a means to assist in the identification of change processes affecting the routines; habits; customs; working practices; and experiences of the post-war police constable in a small borough police force. It acknowledges that the constable was functioning in an occupational environment subject to complex wider detraditionalisation processes evident in society, as well as transformations introduced within the police itself. The concept will allow for the consideration of wider changes apparent in society and the police organisation; as well as providing a focus on detecting changes to habits and routines identified specifically by narrators or found in their testimony. Detraditionalisation marks a reconsideration of attitudes and a contraction of established structures and practices in that they no longer influence or shape

⁴⁷ Giddens, 1990, 31.

behaviour as they once did.⁴⁸ Capturing the responses of constables to the detraditionalisation process is integral to this research.

Detraditionalisation in Society 1945-1968

Many of the changes to policing in the post-war period were in direct response to detraditionalisation occurring in society. Social experiences of, and traditional approaches to: the economy; town planning; youth culture; consumerism; deference; public perceptions of the police and changes in legislation have to be considered as part of the police detraditionalisation process.

The cost of successfully surviving the Second World War was expensive to Britain in terms of both human and economic losses. It had cost the country over a quarter of its national wealth; it retained an ailing empire to manage, and military commitments abroad.⁴⁹ Its approach to planning for the future, begun during the war years, suggested far more state intervention in issues governing social and economic affairs.⁵⁰ In 1941, William Beveridge, an economist, was engaged by the government to chair a committee to investigate reforms to working men's compensation and social insurance. The report of the committee, *Social Insurance and Allied Services*, showed that the investigation of social circumstances could be influential in determining future social policy, one that provided adequate provision from 'cradle to grave'.⁵¹ The election of a Labour Government in 1945 saw the introduction of the 'Welfare State' offering greater provision to meet the needs of society, including a national health service; improvements in social benefits; the nationalisation of major industries, all designed to eradicate deprivation and destitution.⁵² The changes in social welfare supported a sense of innovation to a society that had been cohesive through shared wartime experiences.⁵³ These provided a demarcation point for tradition; those who had not experienced the events of war would have a different

⁴⁸ Hopper, 29.

⁴⁹ Mark Donnelly. *Sixties Britain*. Harlow: (Pearson Longman, 2005), 16.

⁵⁰ Nigel Taylor. *Urban Planning Theory Since 1945*. (London: Sage, 1998), 5.

⁵¹ Ian Gazeley, *Poverty in Britain, 1900-1965*. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 147.

⁵² Kenneth O Morgan. *Britain Since 1945: The People's Peace*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 37.

⁵³ Francois Bedarida. *A Social History of England 1851-1990*. (London: Routledge, 1979), 188.

understanding of society, as compared to those who had. Similarly, those who had supported themselves through ill health, old age and unemployment before 1946 would have a different perspective of the welfare state than those who knew none other than the provision of state care. This suggests that there may be generational differences in attitudes and values that need recognition in the detraditionalisation process when assessing values and attitudes of the younger and older age groups of constables.

However, even with the introduction of the welfare state (representing a significant cost in its own right) Britain's population experienced a period of post-war austerity where finance was not the only problem in rebuilding and reforming society. Redevelopment programmes, for example, suffered from a lack of raw materials. British society had seen more than 200,000 homes destroyed and a further 250,000 made uninhabitable.⁵⁴ As a result, local authorities set out on a programme of rebuilding which required non-traditional methods of construction; including greater use of steel and concrete and the use of temporary prefabricated dwellings.⁵⁵

In 1954, rationing of goods ended. This marked a new age of full employment and the launch of a consumer boom.⁵⁶ From the mid-1950s onward, there was a sharp rise in weekly average earnings; a huge increase in purchases of consumer goods (partly fuelled by easier access to hire purchase); a greater move towards private house ownership; and significant increases in motor vehicle ownership.⁵⁷ Bill Osgerby identifies that Britain's hire purchase debt rose faster from 1956-1959 than at any time before or since and, due to the nature of the consumer boom, employment increased significantly however, many of the jobs created required low levels of skill; providing a boost to youth employment and youth spending power.⁵⁸

From 1938-1971, the proportion of owner-occupied housing increased from 32 per cent to 52 per cent, whilst between 1951-1971, local authority tenured

⁵⁴ Andrew Rosen. *The Transformation of British Life 1950-2000*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), 127.

⁵⁵ Nicholas Bullock. *Building the Post-war World*. (London: Senate, 2002), 219f.

⁵⁶ Donnelly, 23.

⁵⁷ Dominic Sandbrook. *Never Had It So Good*. (London: Little Brown, 2005), 106f.

⁵⁸ Bill Osgerby. *Youth in Britain Since 1945*. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988), 24 and 31.

housing stock increased from 2,200,000 to 4,800,000.⁵⁹ The amount of private motor cars on the road increased from 1,423,200 in 1940 to 9,971,000 in 1970 (+600%).⁶⁰ The increase of car ownership and road traffic led to a growth in road accident casualties; between 1936 and 1966 casualty rates increased from 228,000 to 384,000 (+68%), before starting a slow decline.⁶¹ The strong economy swelled the amount of telephone lines rented. From 1940-1970, the number of telephone calls made in the UK grew from 2215 million to 9622 million (+334%).⁶²

The housing rebuilding schemes created new housing estates, and new towns, away from established communities that had existed during the war; thus removing elements of cohesiveness and local identity within communities that had previously existed. Alison Ravetz argues that the council housing programme, whilst designed to lift people out of poverty, led to a less localised and family oriented society as much of the strong local identity found within slum clearance areas was usurped, and many family groups split.⁶³

The boom in consumerism meant that there were more goods readily available to steal, and the increased use of motor vehicles led to road management issues surrounding congestion, road accidents and an escalation in thefts of and from motor cars. A surge in the use of telephone communications facilitated public contact to the police and added to their increasing workload.

Society's opinions and attitudes towards traditional institutions also changed. For example, religion was one casualty of detraditionalised faith; far fewer people were attending church.⁶⁴ Traditional methods of education were changing. From the 1960s pupils were more likely to receive a

⁵⁹ Alan Holmans. "Housing." In *Twentieth Century British Social Trends*, edited by A H Hasley and Josephine Webb, 469-510. (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 2000), 487.

⁶⁰ Amanda Root. "Transport and Communication". In *Twentieth Century British Social Trends*, edited by A H Hasley and Josephine Webb, 437-468. (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 2000), 442.

⁶¹ Ibid, 460.

⁶² Ibid, 444.

⁶³ Alison Ravetz. *Council Housing and Culture: The History of a Social Experiment*. (London: Routledge, 2001).

⁶⁴ Donnelly, 53.

comprehensive education and higher education was becoming more accessible.⁶⁵ Changes in legislation led to a more liberal approach to: obscene publications; homosexuality; easier divorce; gambling; and liquor licensing. This allowed greater freedom of choice, encouraged individualism and provided a shift of authority from 'without' to 'within'.⁶⁶

Modifications in the criminal justice system in the 1960s also reflected transformations in society. The decade saw the end of the death penalty and an increase in the age of criminal responsibility from the age of eight to ten.⁶⁷ Society was creating new norms of acceptable behaviour, it was rejecting traditional approaches of deference to established institutions and was more likely to question authority; a process of desubordination.⁶⁸ Sectors of society resorted to mass demonstration such as the peaceful Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) with the Aldermaston Marches in 1958, and the more violent, confrontational, anti-establishment demonstrations of the latter 1960s in London, against the Vietnam War.⁶⁹

Consumerism also found a ready market in supplying a growing youth culture; by the late 1950s the range of goods produced for the youth market seemed boundless.⁷⁰ Post-war British youth saw a rise in the money they could spend and popular culture provided a genre, displayed in a style of music and fashion attaching them to a particular brand of lifestyle. Such cults included, in the 1950s the 'Teddy Boys', in the 1960s 'Mods and Rockers' and in the mid to late 1960s, the 'Hippies' and 'Skinheads'.⁷¹

The pop music of the 1950s-60s began to offer "a new form of sexual articulation" that was outside the traditional conventions of romantic love that

⁶⁵ Sandbrook, 2005, 331.

⁶⁶ Hopper, 31.

⁶⁷ George Mair and Lol Burke. *Redemption, Rehabilitation and Risk Management: A History of Probation*. (Oxford: Routledge, 2012), 106f. They argue that changes in society's values led to the removal of corporal punishment as a penalty in courts in 1948, 83.

⁶⁸ Miliband, 1978.

⁶⁹ Sarah Manwarring-White. *The Policing Revolution: Police Technology, Democracy and Liberty in Britain*. (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1983), 24.

⁷⁰ Bill Osgerby. *Youth Media*. (Oxford: Routledge, 2004), 9.

⁷¹ The Teddy Boys quickly developed a reputation for violence fuelled by national media coverage of damaging cinemas and the murder of a man on Clapham Common, Anne-Marie Kilday and David Nash. *Histories of Crime: Britain 1600-2000*. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 128.

“challenged previous gendered moral frameworks”.⁷² Youth cultures were subject, on varying occasions, to a denouncement by society, generated by mass media coverage. This was most notable in the summer of 1964 when ‘Mods and Rockers’ were characterised by mass brawls on the beaches of southern England which led to wider concerns in society, categorised as ‘moral panics’.⁷³ These were of sufficient strength to cause HMIC to report specifically on youth disorder during the summer periods.⁷⁴ Osgerby argues that the concerns of youth crime were a ‘symbolic vehicle for a broader sense of unease at a time of profound social upheaval’.⁷⁵

However, the reality of teenage life in most places during the post-war period was relatively boring; it lacked the ‘excitement’ that society had labelled it.⁷⁶ Nonetheless, the popular culture of the period together with the newfound freedom of expression, fuelled by consumerism, was a defining mark of a rejection of the mores of the previous generation.⁷⁷

Increased consumerism from the mid-1950s, together with other factors, fuelled a rising rate of crime. Whilst criminologists have debated the cause of the crime surge in this period the most significant factor was that there were simply more items available to be stolen.⁷⁸ Recorded crime, which had gradually increased in the 1930s and 1940s, rose significantly with the emerging affluent society from 1954 onwards, reaching its zenith in the early 1990s.⁷⁹ There were less than 500,000 crimes recorded in 1947; this

⁷² Louise A Jackson. “The Coffee Club Menace: Policing Youth, Leisure and Sexuality in Post-war Manchester.” Chap. 12 in *Police and Policing in the Twentieth Century*, edited by Chris A Williams, 243-262. (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), 244.

⁷³ A concept discussed at length by Stanley Cohen. *Folk Devils and Moral Panics*. 3rd edition. (Oxford: Routledge, 2002).

⁷⁴ These disturbances had abated by 1967. HMICAR, 1967.

⁷⁵ Osgerby, 2004, 71.

⁷⁶ Pearl Jephcott, *Time of One’s Own: Leisure and Young People*. (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1967).

⁷⁷ Elizabeth Roberts. *Women and Families: An Oral History 1940-1975*. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), 47.

⁷⁸ Field researched the rise of crime in the post-war period and concluded that whilst many issues contributed to crime increases the most prevalent was the increased availability of consumer goods. Simon Field, *Trends in Crime and their Interpretation: A Study of Recorded Crime in Post-War England and Wales*. (London: HMSO, 1990).

⁷⁹ Roger Hood and Andrew Roddam. “Crime, Sentencing and Punishment.” In *Twentieth Century British Social Trends*, edited by A H Halsey and Josephine Webb, 675-709. (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 2000), 680.

increased to 1,407,774 in 1968 (+182%).⁸⁰ There are many influencing factors that can affect the recorded crime statistics: how they are reported; the ease with which they can be reported; the seriousness of the crime; who determines if they are recorded; changes in crime counting rules by the Home Office; and whether property is insured.⁸¹ Many crimes remain unreported. Thus, the amount of crimes recorded often tells us more about the criminal justice system than about crime itself.⁸² Social behaviour associated with the amount of alcohol consumed is also a factor in crime trends.⁸³ Where society develops a tendency towards new modes of living this can affect crime and offending rates. The increased use of motor vehicles for example led to a growth of road traffic related offences (a 482% increase from 1952-1970).⁸⁴

The culmination of changes to community cohesion; the growth of desubordination and diminished deference to traditional institutions; increases in mobility and consumerism; higher levels of offending and recorded crime rates; together with a perceived rebellious youth culture; and a series of high profile allegations against the police (from the late 1950s), led to an erosion of the police image.⁸⁵ The dependable constable, who shared the hardships of wartime deprivation transformed into a more conflict-oriented character. This evolution of characterisation was promoted by the medium of television, which had created the avuncular image of PC George Dixon in the popular television series *Dixon of Dock Green* (1955-1976).⁸⁶ Television then presented the public with a more 'warts and all' representation of the police with mobile unit beat constables constantly arresting offenders, in *Z-Cars* (1962-1978). It later delivered the *coup de grace* to community service based policing, with the introduction of the hard

⁸⁰ RDS Home Office. *Recorded Crime*, <http://rds.homeoffice/recordedcrime1.html> (accessed February 3rd 2010).

⁸¹ David Jones. *Crime and Policing in the Twentieth Century: The South Wales Experience*. (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1996), 6.

⁸² Barry S Godfrey, Paul Lawrence and Chris A Williams. *History and Crime*. (London: Sage, 2008), 27.

⁸³ Field, 1990.

⁸⁴ Hood and Roddam, 687.

⁸⁵ See Loader and Mulcahy.

⁸⁶ Dixon was a reincarnation of a character murdered in a popular movie *The Blue Lamp* (1951).

drinking always-fighting image of *The Sweeney* (1974-1978).⁸⁷ The police were not always in favour of such presentations. Police officers in Lancashire for example, where *Z-Cars* was meant to be based, objected to being portrayed as wife beaters, men who ate slovenly and who were more interested in horse racing results than performing their duty.⁸⁸

The police had enjoyed a good period of public trust from the Second World War. The Royal Commission of the Police in 1960 found that 83 per cent of the public had a great respect for the police.⁸⁹ However, this had eroded significantly by the 1970s, in a process of 'desacralisation', where the police were no longer treated as infallible; a symptom of change in traditional deference.⁹⁰ However, whilst the traditional view of the police held by the public may have changed, the institution of the police organisation itself was still held as sacred by the constable.⁹¹

The hidden world of the police

Research into the police carried out in the 1960s and 1970s focused on occupational culture, which presented a closed system of solidarity where "Old sweats, tough, brave and knowing all the dodges, passed on their experience and probably their attitudes to recruits."⁹² The culture of the police can be summarised as being one where the officers are suspicious of people; is pragmatic; conservative and machismo; and develops a sense of belonging to a particular group that generates a demarcation between those on the 'inside', and those who are not.⁹³ Elements of solidarity in the police have been interpreted to induce such strong effects as to encourage police officers to lie to cover-up the wrongdoings of colleagues. The police can therefore provide 'a wall of secrecy' to their internal activities.⁹⁴ Further, police officers from all forces experience similar conditions of recruitment,

⁸⁷ Eamonn Carrabine. *Crime Culture and the Media*. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2008), 110.

⁸⁸ Banton, 238.

⁸⁹ HMICAR, 1963.

⁹⁰ Loader and Mulcahy, 127.

⁹¹ Banton, 236-237.

⁹² Emsley, 1996, 219. Early sociological research into the police included Banton, 1964; and Jerome H Skolnick. *Justice Without Trail*. 4th edition (New Orleans: Quid Pro Books, 2011).

⁹³ Reiner, 2010, 118-137.

⁹⁴ Laurence Lustgarten. *The Governance of the Police*. (London: Sweet and Maxwell, 1986), 115.

training, and inculcation processes, leading to similar characteristics being observed in different geographical areas.⁹⁵ Research identified a 'canteen culture' where officers talk in machismo 'gung-ho' terms; this raises concerns over how this secretive group could support police brutality, or police corruption.⁹⁶ For example, the use of violence by the police is described as being 'far more widespread than in orthodox accounts'.⁹⁷ However, research based upon 'canteen oral culture' can be misleading as police officers tend to espouse glory and excitement in a machismo way when detailing their routine duties with each other in a work-socio setting, thus sustaining self-esteem. But, such conversations may not always reflect reality.⁹⁸

Other research into what the police actually do disclose 'easing behaviour', that is to say those activities undertaken by constables during the time that they are meant to be on patrol.⁹⁹ Easing is a traditional activity of the police on duty, where there are clear temptations to "snatch a brief nap, or take a quick drink".¹⁰⁰ The harsh discipline of the police, together with poor working conditions, was instrumental in leading the constables to deviancy.¹⁰¹ There were differing levels of 'easing' from simply chatting to someone on the street, finding a warm place to shelter, to engaging in drunken sprees or sexual gratification. The common denominator of 'easing activities' is that they were all subject to potential disciplinary action. Therefore, 'easing' has characteristics that require the activity to be kept secret from police managers, relies on constables' solidarity to maintain them and excludes untried new constables.¹⁰² The image of the police constable as always being active and involved in exciting investigations and arrests is false.¹⁰³

⁹⁵ Westmarland, 257.

⁹⁶ Ibid, 269.

⁹⁷ Brogden, 1991, 105.

⁹⁸ P A J Waddington. "Police (Canteen) Sub-Culture: An Appreciation." *British Journal of Criminology* 39, no.2 (Spring 1999): 287-309.

⁹⁹ Maureen Cain. *Society and the Policmans Role*. (London: Routledge, 1975).

¹⁰⁰ Taylor, 1997, 52.

¹⁰¹ Brogden, 1991, 85.

¹⁰² Cain, 79.

¹⁰³ Although there is limited research on what beat police officers do in patrol time there is agreement they have a good deal of free time. Christine Famega, James Frank and Lorraine Mazerolle. "Managing Police Patrol Time: The Role of Supervisor Directives." *Justice Quarterly* 22, no. 4 (Dec 2005): 540-559.

The reality was that the constable's job, for the most part, was mundane, repetitive and boring making the prospect of 'easing' enticing.¹⁰⁴

Police officers work in an environment hidden from the view of their supervision and the public, making them difficult to monitor.¹⁰⁵ They work on their own using discretion when making decisions during incidents they encounter.¹⁰⁶ However, this can lead to an uneven approach to criminal justice. For example, one constable may issue a verbal warning for committing a particular offence, another may recommend prosecution. This may raise concerns in the community who expect the law to be administered in an even way.¹⁰⁷ Discretion has an element of personal decision making surrounding how a constable performs his duties, where he places his priorities, and to what extent he is pro-active in carrying out his function. Discretion, when discussing criminal justice issues, generally refers to how a constable exercises his legal powers.¹⁰⁸ It can equally refer to his personal decision making concerning his general approach to dealing with incidents, or people; as the majority of incidents he deals with are not related to criminal justice issues. These 'hidden' aspects of police occupational culture are traditional characteristics of the police and key to understanding how constables operate. As such they constitute an important feature of this work.

Detraditionalisation intrinsic to the police: the constable as a worker 1900-1939

In the early part of the twentieth century, there was a tendency for urban police forces to recruit working class men from preferred rural areas.¹⁰⁹ Recruiting from this social group meant police officers would render deference to those who were their social superiors.¹¹⁰ The rural recruit was deemed more productive, steady, and efficient as compared to the city

¹⁰⁴ Craig Paterson and Ed Pollock. *Policing and Criminology*. (Exeter: Learning Matters, 2011), 59.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, 58.

¹⁰⁶ Emsley, 1996, 235.

¹⁰⁷ Tom Cockcroft. "Using Oral History to Investigate Police Culture." *Qualitative Research* 5, no. 3 (August 2005): 356-384.

¹⁰⁸ Alison Wakefield and Jenny Fleming. *The Sage Dictionary of Policing*. (London: Sage, 2009), 85.

¹⁰⁹ Shpayer-Makov, 2002, 44.

¹¹⁰ Peter Joyce, *Policing: Development and Contemporary Practice*. (London: Sage, 2011), 14.

dweller; and more deferential to his employers. In London, this approach evolved into recruiting policy guidelines, aiming to have socially conditioned men in preference to the less acceptable local man.¹¹¹ The trend to recruit from outside the local area was evident in many police forces and continued in some until at least the 1960s. In South Wales there had been an active process to recruit from England, which had begun to diminish by the mid-twentieth century. For example in Merthyr, by 1964, 84 per cent of constables were recruited from the immediate area, reversing the previous policy of recruiting from outside.¹¹² It has been argued that external recruitment would lead to less loyalty from constables to those being policed, due to a lack of a sense of belonging to the social group.¹¹³ Physical deportment and educational ability were also key aspects of recruitment. When there was an excess of recruits, these attributes provided a competitive element allowing the force to be selective.¹¹⁴ During the early part of the twentieth-century, applicants often outnumbered vacancies, giving rise to greater selectivity.¹¹⁵

The prime motivation for joining the police was on the premise of regular earnings and that the skills required were basic.¹¹⁶ There was a strong appeal to join the police in the early twentieth century. Men with better educational abilities began to apply not simply because education provision had improved but because there was a growing allure as a career choice.¹¹⁷ However, poor pay and working conditions, oppressive discipline and management, together with additional duties imposed by the First World War took their toll resulting in a series of strikes in 1918 and 1919 by police trade unionists; particularly in London, Liverpool and Birmingham.¹¹⁸ The disputes

¹¹¹ Ibid, 43.

¹¹² Jones, 13.

¹¹³ Emsley, 1996, 197.

¹¹⁴ Shpayer-Markov, 2002, 35.

¹¹⁵ Haia Shpayer-Makov. "A Portrait of a Novice Constable in the London Metropolitan Police c.1900." Chap.13 in *Police and Policing in the Twentieth-Century*, edited by Chris A Williams, 265-292. (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011).

¹¹⁶ Klein, 2010, 13.

¹¹⁷ Mark Clapston, and Clive Emsley. "Street, Beat and Respectability: The Culture and Self-image of the Late Victorian and Edwardian Urban Policeman." Chap. 14 in *Police and Policing in the Twentieth-Century*, edited by Chris A Williams, 293-317. (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011).

¹¹⁸ Klein, 2010, 132-167, explores the chronology of the industrial dispute involving NUPPO (National Union of Police and Prison Officers).

were resolved by the setting up of a committee (Desborough Committee) to investigate aspects of policing. Their recommendations led to the Police Act 1919, which barred trade union membership in the police and formed an official representative body for police officers (The Police Federation).¹¹⁹ The Act introduced a national standard of police regulations covering employment, pay and allowances to constables, leading the way towards regulated and more professional policing.

The Act represented a milestone in providing official national representation to the police and presented a sense of cohesion at a time when there were many forces, both county and borough, each with their own governance. Desborough Committee discussions included, and rejected, the provision of a national police force; highlighting the difficulty or unwillingness to push for amalgamations between forces.¹²⁰ The strikes and subsequent debates surrounding the role of the police may have been influential in diffusing levels of resentment against them by the working class in the following decade.¹²¹ However, issues of: police pay; efficiency; effectiveness; maintaining the strength of the force; and potential force amalgamations were regular topics of discussion in subsequent Royal Commissions and Home Office inquiries.¹²²

Recruiting from the inter-war years through to the late-1970s became problematic as the rate of wastage in the police increased and vacancies exceeded the number of recruits.¹²³ However, it was recognised that the state of unemployment in various regions affected recruitment at a local level.¹²⁴

The inter-war years saw changes to the constables' working routines with the introduction of technology on a greater scale, enabling staff to be managed

¹¹⁹ Rawlings, 2002, 182 -183.

¹²⁰ Ibid, 185.

¹²¹ Joyce, 16.

¹²² Particularly The Home Office *Reports on the Police Conditions of Service* of 1949 and the *Royal Commission on the Police 1960*.

¹²³ In 1963 a survey showed that the main causes for officers leaving the force were domestic reasons, to take up other preferred occupations, and poor pay. Even though a substantial pay rise had been awarded in 1960. Cain, 7.

¹²⁴ HMICAR, 1947.

more efficiently and utilising equipment that was becoming more accessible.¹²⁵ The usual tedium of urban beat foot patrol changed with the widespread introduction of police signal boxes and telephone pillars. This reduced the number of constables required for patrol duties and saw the introduction of police mobility on a greater scale, including the use of pedal cycles and motor vehicles.¹²⁶ Using police boxes and pillars to communicate with supervision placed more surveillance on the activities of constables, some initially resented the intrusive nature of having to be routinely in contact with their stations and being under greater control of supervision.¹²⁷ However, the police box provided communication, improved supervision and afforded a safety check for constables.¹²⁸ At the same time, greater mobility to respond to calls from the public, and police officers, became a significant tool in addressing the management of road traffic. By 1931, the Home Secretary insisted that each force should have a mobile patrol.¹²⁹ In 1956, HMIC 'invited' all forces to introduce a traffic department.¹³⁰

Wireless communications were a topical technical innovation in the inter-war period. The first use of radio in the North East, and many other regions, was during the General Strike of 1926 when radio sets were installed in police stations to receive radio communications via the BBC.¹³¹ Whilst changes in communication were introduced for efficiency, they were now prompted by emergency. During the inter-war period, experiments with telegraphy wireless communications were on-going by various forces, most notably Nottingham City, Lancashire, West Riding of Yorkshire and Brighton.¹³² Whilst many forces had incorporated telegraphy communication, the

¹²⁵ Keith Laybourn and David Taylor, *Policing in England and Wales, 1918-39: The Fed, Flying Squads and Forensics*. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), discuss developments to incorporate technology and mobility to address changes in society.

¹²⁶ John Bunker, *The Rise and Fall of the Police Box*. (Studley: Brewin Books, 2011), one of the few in-depth studies into the development of the police signal box system.

¹²⁷ Joanne Klein. "Traffic, Telephones and Police Boxes: The Deterioration of Beat Policing in Liverpool and Manchester between the World Wars." In Chap. 5 in *Police and Policing in the Twentieth-Century*, edited by Chris A Williams, 87-108. (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011).

¹²⁸ Cain, 56.

¹²⁹ Jones, 203.

¹³⁰ HMICAR, 1956.

¹³¹ Brian Pears. *A History of Emergency Service Communications in the North East*. (Unpublished, 1987), 6.

¹³² Arthur L Dixon. *The Emergency Work of the Police Forces in the Second World War*. (London: HMSO, 1963), 60.

progress towards telephony was slow. Indeed, the Metropolitan Police initially discounted developing wireless telephony; one indicator of resistance apparent to the introduction of change.¹³³

Detraditionalisation intrinsic to the police: the constable as a worker 1939-1968

The varying methods in the way an urban constable performed duty in the period 1945-1968, assist in identifying: changes to the way he was required to patrol his beat; the impact the introduction of technology had on his working day; the tactics he conformed with; and innovations introduced by the government. The traditional way he performed his role was shaped by changes in: legislation; modes of society (including the physical environment such as rebuilding and modernisation of the urban landscape); the social habits of the community; and changes in the economy (from austerity to affluence). Change is also marked in the way the constable's own occupational environment transformed, for example, by how he was managed and to what extent his 'easing' and discretionary activities were required to adapt to new situations.

The onset of the Second World War, as in the Great War, placed additional duties on the police, including: the monitoring of aliens; the provision of community intelligence to the Home Office; as well as the prevention of crime and the safety of the public during air raids.¹³⁴ This provided a basis for the collation of intelligence on a number of issues, including public morale. War also acted as a catalyst for the further development of wireless telephony for the police. The need for a common response to the impact of war led to a pool of knowledge and tactics nationally coordinated by a series of regional police commissioners.¹³⁵ Further, the potential of invasion led to the amalgamation of some police forces, particularly on the south east coast of England.¹³⁶ These actions served to illustrate the need for greater unification

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Ibid, 33.

¹³⁵ Ibid, 89.

¹³⁶ Ibid, 192-194.

of the myriad of police forces managed by a variety of watch committees and joint standing committees.¹³⁷

However, by 1943, government departments were preparing for post-war redevelopment, planning the rebuilding of bomb damaged industrial and domestic habitat, and the social fabric, including the sustenance of an effective police service. The Home Office Post-War Committee considered the future of policing, including: police organisation; training; promotion; buildings; welfare; communication; police boxes; and sickness. They produced four reports between 1946 and 1947, which provided a detailed blue print for the development of policing.¹³⁸

Issues of recruitment and manpower wastage were more pronounced in the post-war period and continued to dog the efficiency of the police in the following three decades. Men were retained beyond retirement age and others had been called into military service; auxiliary officers and special constables supplemented the force.¹³⁹ Following the war, the economic situation meant mass recruiting was not feasible and forces were provided limits on the number that could be employed.¹⁴⁰ An optimistic aspect of immediate post-war policing was that the public held a positive image of the police. The public by necessity had to rely on, and work with, the police during wartime and shared their efforts and sacrifices.¹⁴¹ This made the joint experience cohesive, and placed the police in good standing.¹⁴²

Nonetheless, in 1948 a committee chaired by Lord Oaksey, investigated police conditions of service and concluded that police work was monotonous and that 80 per cent of constables performed their first ten years of service

¹³⁷ Emsley, 1996, 167.

¹³⁸ Home Office, *Police Post-War Committee Reports, 1 to 4*. (London: HMSO, 1946-1947).

¹³⁹ HMIC reported in 1947 that the authorised strength of police in England and Wales was 49,690 the actual strength was 42,819 the gap between the two representing a near 14% deficit. As demands on police increased HMICARs reported on the increasing gap. Figures from HMICAR, 1948.

¹⁴⁰ In South Shields, limits were governed by a Home Office circular HO/54 1947, which dictated that no more than eight officers were to be recruited. There were no further circulars mentioned in the watch committee minutes after 1949. Watch Committee Meeting Minutes Vol 103, 22/1/47. South Shields Local History Library.

¹⁴¹ Ingleton, 360-361.

¹⁴² Sandbrook, 2005, 403. Also see Reiner, 2010, 77-78.

on foot patrol much of it during the night.¹⁴³ Although the committee examined various methods of foot patrol used in combination with mobility and radio, they were reluctant to recommend any new radical ideas. There had not been an outgrowth of the relationship to the traditional methods of foot patrol to suggest that new techniques would be improvements; the committee saw no reason to change methods of policing.¹⁴⁴ This was disappointing for the Police Federation who believed that poor pay and lack of innovation on working conditions would do little to retain officers.¹⁴⁵

A new aspect of policing inaugurated in the immediate post-war period was the greater recruitment of female police officers. The use of women police officers in the First World War did not launch their mass long-term recruitment; the majority of chief constables in 1920 were opposed to women police officers.¹⁴⁶ This situation had changed by 1948 when the Police Federation agreed to the recruitment of women. In 1950, the authorised strength of policewomen was over 1,500; by 1968, it had increased to 4,280.¹⁴⁷ The impact of women performing police support roles during wartime had influenced this change of heart. Segregated from male police officers, women were recruited for the skills they possessed, rather than simply to make up establishment numbers.¹⁴⁸ For example, the policewoman's department dealt with a range of specific duties targeting females, children and family issues as well as some ancillary tasks. However, the role of the woman officer was distinctly different to that of the male - they were a specialised unit and the routine of beat patrol was the preserve of the male until 1975.¹⁴⁹ Therefore, this work concentrates on the role of the male officer.

¹⁴³ Clive Emsley. "The birth and development of the police." In *Handbook of Policing*, edited by Tim Newburn, 72-89. (Cullompton: Willan, 2008), 86.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid, 87.

¹⁴⁵ Tony Judge. *The Force of Persuasion*. (Surbiton: The Police Federation, 1994), 112.

¹⁴⁶ Emsley, 2008, 85.

¹⁴⁷ HMICARs, 1950 and 1968.

¹⁴⁸ Jackson, 2006, 61.

¹⁴⁹ Women held the same role as their male colleagues from 1975 with the introduction of the Sex Discrimination Acts of 1975 and 1976. Their pay, formerly less than male officers, was also given parity. Ibid, 2.

There were 131 police forces in England and Wales in 1947. This figure does not include private forces covering rail networks or commercial enterprises such as the Tyne Improvement Commission's River Tyne Police.¹⁵⁰ The Police Act 1946 created amalgamations that replaced 31 non-county forces, in addition to 19 forces that had disappeared in the amalgamation process engineered during the war.¹⁵¹ Therefore, prior to the war, there had been nearer 180 police forces. The local governance of these forces varied, as did their size, nature of equipment used and their approach to improving police systems. Such diversity was a significant factor in influencing the modernisation process brought about by the Royal Commission on the Police of 1960-62.

Developments in the police during the post-war period were constrained by economic distress and the lack of raw materials for the building of new stations. However, the national development of wireless telephony had developed significantly by 1952 when the HMIC reported that of the 125 county and borough forces, 107 had wireless installed.¹⁵² The improvement in communication came about at the same time as the development of the 999 emergency telephone systems, introduced in 1937.¹⁵³ Telephony communication increased with the creation of more telephone stations as the country's economy flourished.¹⁵⁴

A change in the recorded crime rates occurred from 1954; they were to increase annually for the next four decades.¹⁵⁵ There were greater demands on policing by increases in road traffic; the need to police newly developed housing; and a society beginning to enjoy new found freedoms due to changes in legislation governing lifestyle (notably gambling and the sale of alcohol). The police, with limited resources, were becoming less effective in

¹⁵⁰ HMICAR, 1947.

¹⁵¹ Dixon, 195.

¹⁵² HMICAR, 1952.

¹⁵³ John Bunker. *From Rattle to Radio*. (Studley: Brewin Books, 1988), 206.

¹⁵⁴ Sandbrook sees the end of rationing, the relaxation of hire purchase regulations and rises in real earnings as placing the change from austerity to affluence and its consequent boom in consumerism. Sandbrook, 2005, 106.

¹⁵⁵ From, 434, 327 in 1954, to 5,591,717 in 1992, an increase of 1187%. Crime figures from Home Office Recorded Crime Statistics for 1898 to 2001. <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/science-research-statistics/research-statistics/crime-research/crime-stats-1898-2002> accessed 4 May 2010.

dealing with a more complex society. Nonetheless, other than a growth in some technology there was little change to the working routine of an urban beat patrol officer of the 1950s compared to his counterpart of the 1930s.

The constable's job was service oriented and consisted of providing a routine, mundane, system of patrol to a given area, checking the security of property and dealing with public disorder. An overview of the constables' working conditions would define them by poor pay, strict conditions of employment, harsh (often petty) discipline, and limited opportunity for promotion. Constables increasingly considered the working conditions imposed as archaic and untenable, particularly when considered with the more liberal socio-economic changes evident in 1960s British society.¹⁵⁶

There were efforts to bring the working hours of a constable in line with other industries; the official working week of a constable was reduced from 48 to 44 hours in 1955.¹⁵⁷ However, recruitment was still a key issue not helped by poor pay; by 1960, the maximum pay of a constable was 5 per cent and the minimum pay 30 per cent less than the average earnings in industry.¹⁵⁸ The reality of beat work was to trudge around on foot patrol in all weathers and to deal with incidents as they emerged. This often entailed the constable having to meet violence with violence. Policing was not pleasant from the constable's perspective, or that of those being policed.¹⁵⁹

The 1960s was the decade that marked significant changes in the way the constable was perceived by the public.¹⁶⁰ A plethora of concern emerged in the late 1950s surrounding the conduct of the police amid allegations of corruption and misconduct.¹⁶¹ This led to a Royal Commission on Police (1960), which examined the role of the constable, his working conditions and how he was governed. The recommendations of the Commission were

¹⁵⁶ Loader and Mulcahy, 207.

¹⁵⁷ HMICAR, 1955. Hours were further reduced from 44 to 42 per week in July 1964, Judge, 1994, 192.

¹⁵⁸ Critchley, 249.

¹⁵⁹ Brogden, 1991, 5.

¹⁶⁰ Concern in relation to police corruption and malpractice portrayed in the national press, negatively influenced public perceptions of the police in the late 1950s. Terence Morris. *Crime and Criminal Justice Since 1945*. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989), 62.

¹⁶¹ Critchley, 270f, provides a resume of these cases.

ratified in the Police Act 1964, which created a tripartite method of governance. This empowered the Home Office to dictate policy; provided operational control to chief constables; and reduced the influence of the former police authorities (watch committees and standing joint committees) who were now relegated to ensuring that their forces were well equipped and maintained.¹⁶² The Royal Commission paved the way for more force amalgamations via the Police Act and introduced improvements to the ways in which the public could complain against the police.¹⁶³ The first of the amalgamations occurred in 1965 and eventually led to the current number of police forces in England and Wales (43 in 2012).

By the end of the 1960s, policing was seen in terms of specialisms with skilled constables deployed into roles that required specialist knowledge such as crime prevention, traffic, mobile patrols and communications. Such moves consigned the status of the lowly foot beat constable to one of being an initiation stage to be endured, before moving onto more exciting roles.¹⁶⁴

The amalgamations signified the end of direct control by local authorities of 'their' police force. They had founded their forces, had municipal pride in them and held the power to discipline and dismiss. Many of the forces resisted or grudgingly volunteered to be amalgamated; they recognised that their fate was doomed. Some appealed (unsuccessfully) against amalgamation arguing that they were needed on civic grounds, one notable case being Cardiff.¹⁶⁵ The increasing demands made on the police in the 1960s, intensified by a lack of police officers and a downturn in the economy, led to a centralised search for more efficient means of performing the police patrol function. In 1963, the Police Scientific Development Branch was created to provide advice on technology and equipment; assets seen as natural tools to address police inefficiencies.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶² Les Johnson, *Policing Britain: Risk, Security and Governance*. (London: Longman, 2000), gives a discussion placing the governance of the police in the wider context of police modernisation.

¹⁶³ Home Office. *Royal Commission on the Police 1962, Final Report*. Cmnd. 1728. (London: HMSO, 1962).

¹⁶⁴ Daniel Gilling. *Crime Prevention: Theory, Policy and Politics*. (London: UCL Press, 1997), 111.

¹⁶⁵ Jones, 191.

¹⁶⁶ Weatheritt, 12.

In the early 1960s there were trials with CCTV (close circuit television), and the use of helicopters as police observation posts had been piloted since 1955 (mainly for civil defence purposes).¹⁶⁷ Computer technology was in its infancy and some forces had experimented with their use for administrative purposes. The first fully functional Police National Computer (PNC) operated from 1974 and the earliest computerised 'command and control' system was set up in Birmingham in 1972.¹⁶⁸ The Police Act 1964 introduced a range of common services for the police; centrally funded they provided resources to assist police operations. These included: forensic laboratories; seven district training centres; regional crime squad coordination; police staff colleges; recruitment and publicity.¹⁶⁹ The development of technology and specialist departments to progress police methods and organisation were indications of a move towards greater professionalism.¹⁷⁰

The most significant advances in technology brought into use by the Home Office were personal radios and the greater use of mobile patrols. There had been problems in designing a personal radio of sufficient quality and in 1964 a variety of sets were field-tested.¹⁷¹ These prototype sets were ill suited for purpose. However in 1966, the Home Office gave preference to a two-piece personal radio, the Pye Pocketfone. This became the first personal radio issued en-masse for use by patrolling officers.¹⁷² By September 1968, 11,068 sets were in use from 407 separate stations; by October, a further 21,050 were on order.¹⁷³ The introduction of radio communication on a large scale indicated that it was to become a permanent part of the constable's routine and marked the demise of the police box system.

The personal radio, whilst providing direct communication with patrolling officers, could not address the growing demands made of the police. In an

¹⁶⁷ Barrie Sheldon and Paul Wright, *Policing and Technology*. (Exeter: Learning Matters, 2010), 85, comment on the use of CCTV. Helicopter use was reported by HMICAR, 1955.

¹⁶⁸ Manwarring-Wright, 71.

¹⁶⁹ Mike Brogden. *The Police, Autonomy and Consent*. (London: Academic Press, 1982), 105.

¹⁷⁰ David Alan Slansky. "Seeing Blue: Police Reform, Occupational Culture and Cognitive Burn-In." Chap. 1 in *Police Occupational Culture: New Debates and Directions*, edited by Megan O'Neil, Monique Marks and Anne-Marie Singh, 19-45. Oxford: JAI press, 2007, 24.

¹⁷¹ HMICAR, 1963.

¹⁷² Ray Stoodley. "Personal Radio Communication." Directorate of Telecommunications, November, 1968, 2. <http://www.dtels.org/html/1968prmemo.html> accessed June 11 2011.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

attempt to achieve this, the government turned to unit beat policing. Success was claimed for this system in Kirkby, Lancashire, where it had apparently been effective in: reducing crime; increasing the detection rate; reducing criminal damage and street accidents.¹⁷⁴ The system emphasised efficiency, decreasing the amount of staff required reducing 11 foot beats to five.¹⁷⁵ The Home Office resolved to introduce this system nationally. Unit beat policing utilised a team-based approach to addressing incidents in a given area by using: a small car (providing a 24-hour response); residential beat officers who lived in the area; a detective; and a collator (an officer assigned to coordinate information and intelligence). These resources were intended to provide a faster response to incidents with the benefit of being able to cover combined beats with fewer staff. However, the system became reactive to calls made by the public and reduced the number of visible foot patrols in the community, thus placing distance between them and the police.¹⁷⁶ By 1968, the unit beat system operated in over two-thirds of England and Wales.¹⁷⁷

A strong argument presented by Mollie Weatheritt suggests that the implementation of the unit beat system was severely flawed, and promoted on unreliable data.¹⁷⁸ The benefits of the system were contested, the demands on the police were not stemmed, police-community relations did not appear to improve and a policing system based purely on response emerged; where the police became 'depersonalised and insensitive' to the community.¹⁷⁹ Weatheritt's research disclosed that some forces failed to appoint residential beat constables and team structures of uniform and CID never gelled. By 1970, few officers patrolled on foot and those that did were generally based in city or town centres.¹⁸⁰ The unit beat system was a failure, police were no longer pro-active in seeking incidents but merely reacting to calls to attend them, a system categorised by some

¹⁷⁴ Weatheritt, 89. There was no publicly available published data to support implementation.

¹⁷⁵ Emsley, 1996, 175.

¹⁷⁶ David Wilson, John Ashton and Douglas Sharp. *What Everyone in Britain Should Know About the Police*. (London: Blackstone Press, 2001), 56.

¹⁷⁷ Emsley, 1996, 175.

¹⁷⁸ Weatheritt, 88-97.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid, 96.

¹⁸⁰ Charles Edwards. *Changing Police Theories for 21st Century Societies*. (Sydney: The Federation Press, 2005), 71.

commentators as 'fire-brigade' policing. In fact, most forces abandoned it in the early 1970s.¹⁸¹

Conclusions

Using the concept of detraditionalisation to assist in the recognition of change to the actual working practices of the post-war police constable is unique to the research of police studies, including the social history of the police. No social history of the police adopts this approach to act as a framework delving into the specific activities of the constable during a period of significant change in the post-war period (as outlined above). This work uses detraditionalisation as a concept to identify change processes brought about by wider social changes in society as an external context that affected the police, as well as internal changes intrinsic to the police.

There are no published academic studies of the development of small county borough police forces in adapting to the profusion of post-war change, and available academic publications of policing in the twentieth century fall short of comprehensively exploring the implementation of unit beat policing and the eventual amalgamation process. For the first time this work examines the change process in the detraditionalisation of policing in a typical small county borough police force (South Shields); a miniature self-contained unit compared to that of larger forces. Crucially it records the responses of the constables to these changes. South Shields County Borough Police Force (known and referred to hereafter as South Shields Borough Police) was selected due to the availability of former constables willing to provide oral testimony and who had worked in the force from 1947 until its amalgamation with its larger neighbouring force Durham County Constabulary in 1968.¹⁸²

This work will contribute to the knowledge of the constable's occupational environment and concentrates on themes identified in the change process: recruitment and training; dealing with changes in society; changes in police

¹⁸¹ Mike Stephens. *Policing: The Critical Issues*. (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1988), 12.

¹⁸² There are no specific publications on this force's history. However, some valuable work is contained in Frederick C Moffatt. *Constable: A History of Northumbria Police*. n.d. and an essay by Thomas Barnes. *A History of the South Shields Police*. (Unpublished work: National Police Library, 1957).

technology and tactics (including the implementation of unit beat policing); and amalgamation. Significantly, it relies heavily on the actual experiences of former police constables.

Chapter 2: Methodology

Introduction

A primary source of data for this thesis is the oral testimonies of 36 narrators, former police officers who worked in South Shields from 1947-1968. Their testimony was recorded in 2010. However, archival and document research are critical components of examining the process of change they encountered and are intrinsic to this work. They provide sources of reference, data to support, or refute, the oral histories and a wealth of information on the social health of the town. Archival material was sourced from Durham County Records Office; The National Police Library; the Northern Region Film and Television Archive; South Shields Local History Library and Tyne and Wear Archives. The amount of data accessed from the archives is controlled by rules governing the access to personal data; Tyne and Wear Archives in particular ruled that any information relating to living people could not be released, this covered all crime reports, incident logs and personnel records. Other documents used in this work were provided from specialist web sites, personal memoirs of retired officers and official police documents owned by the narrators and the National Association of Retired Police Officers (NARPO).

Oral history testimony was chosen as the main historical source for four reasons. Firstly, it provided the opportunity to create accounts of police interaction within society at a personal level by obtaining the experiences, attitudes and opinions of operational officers. Second, such an approach, using a flexible investigative interview technique, allowed for the probing of changes in society, technology and governance during a transformative period for local and national policing. Thirdly, it allowed sensitive issues surrounding police culture such as misconduct, 'easing' behaviour and internal conflict to be disclosed. Finally, the use of oral history testimony assists in filling a lacuna in police history dominated by official accounts and those of the elite in policing management. In contrast, this research has taken a bottom up approach.

The oral testimony was captured in 65 audio-recorded, semi-structured interviews, covering 34 narrators' life stories, recorded in 2010, and three additional transcripts

of oral history interviews, carried out in May 1994. One of the officers from 1994 was also interviewed in 2010; 36 narrators in total were interviewed. Five narrators took part in three separate interviews, 21 were interviewed twice and 10 were interviewed on one occasion. The average time spent interviewing each participant was two hours and 10 minutes. The interviews are comprehensive and were digitised and transcribed for eventual deposit into a public archive.

Oral testimony can generally be placed into three broad categories when considering historical research, oral history, oral tradition and life stories.¹ Oral history can be defined as the “living memory of the past”, where people recall their stories and provide “raw material for history”.² Such interviews are popular with sociologists and can focus on specific subjects.³ As a result oral history interviews can sometimes be shorter in duration than other forms of interview.⁴ Oral tradition relates to the passage of memories and stories from one generation to another.⁵ While the life story, or life history, is the taking of an autobiographical account of the narrator, it allows them to “relate their entire life, from childhood to the present”.⁶ The life story approach is the most time-consuming method of recording oral testimonies but the evidence gathered is more comprehensive and provides a fuller picture of changes evident in the period studied.⁷

The interview method allowed the narrators substantial freedom to express their life story unhindered by too many interruptions. However, the ability to give free expression was not limitless, nor was the interview process uncontrolled. The recording of an oral history interview as a research method has a purpose and function on which the interview is centred. A free flowing dialogue between the researcher and narrator with no set pattern or control can “easily degenerate into little more than anecdotal gossip”.⁸ When necessary there was the introduction of new questions, or a renewed approach to an already given question, to ensure that

¹ Hugo Slim and Paul Thompson. *Listening for a Change*. (London: Panos, 1993), 11.

² Ibid.

³ Donald A Ritchie. *Doing Oral History*. 2nd edition. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 40.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Lynn Abrams. *Oral History Theory*. (Oxford: Routledge, 2010), 176.

⁶ Ritchie, 40.

⁷ Slim and Thompson, 59.

⁸ Thompson, 2000, 226.

the interview remained focused. An interview guide was used to provide a chronology of the subjects to be explored (see Appendix 1). The use of the guide was flexible. Often in the course of an interview new material would emerge of such value to require a new direction to be followed. An interview guide, used in such a way, is not an inflexible instrument.⁹

The questions were designed to provide the narrator opportunities to consider and recollect their career in the police force, with particular reference to those aspects subject to change. They allowed for the exploration of career changes (promotion, specialisation, technical), as well as topics outside the remit of the current work (policewomen, civil defence, cadets, and police recollections beyond 1968). However, they also explored issues common to all in the 'borough', such as recruitment, training and 'easing' behaviour. This allowed testimonies of officers who joined the police at different times to be compared assisting in identifying the change process. All narrators were asked about changes that they would have all experienced for example, the introduction of personal radios or the unit beat system of police patrol.

A secondary purpose of the life story approach was to engender a rapport with the narrators, which provided a mutual trust that fostered a "psychological bond to ease the introduction of the interview process".¹⁰ The amount of personal disclosure by me was deliberately limited; the purpose of an oral historian is to ask questions and allow the respondent to give their answer.¹¹ Any disclosures I made were in direct response to questions raised by narrators; they were kept brief and allowed the flow of the interview to continue.¹²

There were clear benefits during the rapport building process to being an 'insider', a person from the same occupational background. The influential effect of the relationship between the researcher and narrator, when the researcher belongs to the same or a similar community can be beneficial. The insider knows the way around the subject, is less easily fooled and understands the nuances and culture

⁹ Yow, 2005, 73.

¹⁰ Eric Shepherd. *Investigative Interviewing: The Conversation Management Approach*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 19.

¹¹ Ken Howarth. *Oral History*. (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 1999), 138.

¹² The author is a retired police inspector.

applicable to that community.¹³ However, there are disadvantages, the outsider can ask for the obvious to be explained, while the insider, who may be misinformed in assuming the answer, does not ask for fear of seeming foolish.¹⁴ There were occasions when narrators related routines or methods they had used in the past, which to them were ordinary mundane issues; they sometimes showed surprise when I asked them to describe them further. One such occasion was when a narrator was asked to explain how an 'A' and 'B' button worked on a public telephone in the 1950s, a system he was familiar with but unknown to me.¹⁵ Such incidents were rare and the level of rapport was good; narrators often assumed that I was of 'their' generation. The difficulty of building rapport when interviewing former police officers as an outsider, as compared to interviewing other groups from different occupations, may well be more challenging due to the solidarity that exists in the police force, still evident post retirement.¹⁶

There are difficulties in researching the behaviour and performance of police officers. There is a fear held by them of letting outsiders see the reality of policing.¹⁷ The police have a culture that is suspicious of outsiders, reflected in the solidarity and code of silence that they share with each other.¹⁸ The culture is further augmented by conflicts that emerge within the hierarchical rank structure of the police organisation, the division of staff between uniformed patrol and specialist units and discord between 'street cops' and 'management cops'.¹⁹ When in the workplace this conflict can activate secrecy to protect them from supervisory officers when committing minor violations of police discipline.²⁰ Obtaining information from police officers during research can be difficult due to an ethos that sees any intrusion into police practices as a threat, this includes enquiring into 'easing behaviour'.²¹ Brogden found that discussing the use of violence or the

¹³ Thompson, 2000, 140.

¹⁴ Ibid, 141.

¹⁵ 1st Interview JH, the narrator was describing how to use public telephones by pressing buttons to retrieve money.

¹⁶ Holdaway argues the police are secretive to protect themselves from public accountability and disciplinary action. Simon Holdaway. "Changes in Urban Policing." In *Policing Volume 1*. By Robert Reiner. Gateshead: Athenaem Press, 1977, 434.

¹⁷ Malcolm Young, *An Inside Job*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 42.

¹⁸ Maurice Punch. *Police Corruption Deviance, Accountability and Reform in Policing*. (Cullompton: Willan, 2009), 37.

¹⁹ Reiner, 2010, 122.

²⁰ Holdaway, 434.

²¹ Cain, 37.

receiving of 'perks' with narrators was resisted, as they saw these as subjects 'not for public scrutiny'.²² Researchers are viewed with high levels of suspicion; and silence can descend when police officers feel that they are under scrutiny.²³ The current research includes the investigation of internal conflict and 'easing' behaviour. Whilst experiencing some reluctance to comment on these topics the majority of narrators were willing to disclose them (although often describing them as the activities of others).

There are other reasons that may cause difficulty for former police officers to disclose experiences. The tasks performed by the police can be unpleasant, and on occasions dangerous. Narrators may feel that traumatic incidents they experienced are difficult to recall, and thus conceal them from others, including close family members.²⁴ Research suggests that with trauma, memory can recall the 'central core' of such incidents but peripheral details may be lost.²⁵ Further, they may not be able to reconstruct the event by finding it difficult to identify words that describe the uniqueness of their experience. Such life experiences may not be disclosed as they produce a range of emotional reminiscence regarded as secret, rather than a story to be shared.²⁶ There may also be reluctance to disclose police practices due to the confidential nature of duties performed and legal aspects of the Official Secrets Act 1989. These were issues for deliberation when considering the 'present' focus of the narrator's discourse. A further caveat was the effect of 'trivial persuasion', the tendency for the 'listener' to be convinced of an account due to the high level of detail provided. Displaying good memory, whether verified or not, enhances credibility.²⁷ Interestingly, the ability to remember the humdrum daily events of life is often easily recalled, this is perhaps because they were part of routine necessity.²⁸

²² Brogden, 1991, 110.

²³ This is highlighted in research by Gerd Muehlheusser and Andreas Roider. "Black sheep and walls of silence." *Journal of Economic Behaviour and Organisation* 65 (2008): 387-408.

²⁴ Ritchie, 36.

²⁵ Yow, 2005, 46.

²⁶ Mark Klemperer, "Navigating Life Review Interviews with Survivors of Trauma." Chap. 16 in *The Oral History Reader*, edited by Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson, 198 - 210. (Abingdon: Routledge, 2006).

²⁷ Spellman, Barbara A, and Elizabeth R Tenney. "Credible testimony in and out of court." *Psychonomic Bulletin and Review*. 17 (2) (2010): 168-173.

²⁸ Yow, 2005, 42.

Recruitment of narrators

Five main methods were employed to recruit narrators. They were: the engagement of retired police officers from the South Tyneside Branch of NARPO; a press release; distribution of posters in local libraries and community centres; and internet searching. Finally, once narrators were identified there was a snowballing effect, where those interviewed encouraged others to contribute, and provided contact details. Whilst there were clear benefits to the use of such methods of recruitment, there were also disadvantages.

The South Tyneside Branch of NARPO caters for retired police officers from a number of forces, including South Shields Borough Police Force. However, the membership of the organisation is primarily for officers who attained pension status following 25 or 30 years service.²⁹ Thus, officers who resigned prior to pensionable age, who were dismissed, or those who decided not to join NARPO are excluded from membership, and potential recruitment. A criticism of the interview sample used in the research of Brogden and Weinberger was that it was restricted to a narrow group of narrators provided by NARPO.³⁰

However, police officers who have served for a sustained period and through the era of change who are able to comment upon the 'before and after' are preferred for this research. These people were also exemplars or custodians of their tradition.³¹ The methods used to recruit participants for this work did not rely solely on NARPO membership (they constituted a little over a third of those interviewed). Although the sample of narrators relied heavily on self-selected volunteers, this work recognises that the alternative views of others have necessarily been lost. The committee of the South Tyneside Branch of NARPO would not disclose personal details of any member to ensure shielding from potential data protection issues. They supported the research by allowing members to be approached at NARPO meetings.

Following contact with a reporter of the *Shields Gazette*, a local newspaper, it published a two-page article on the oral history project aimed at recruiting potential

²⁹ National Association of Retired Police Officers. *NARPO*. 2012. <http://www.narpo.org.uk> (accessed March 12, 2012). Membership Rule 4.

³⁰ Klein, 2010, 2.

³¹ Shils, 13.

narrators (see Appendix 2). The newspaper has a circulation generally limited to the geographical area of South Tyneside, yet the article generated enquiries from as far as Canada.³² Problems such as the parochialism of the newspaper and the inability to have editorial control of the article were outweighed by the sense of legitimacy it provided. The article led to the recruitment of two narrators and contributed to a number of readers providing secondary sources of information, including photographs and private papers.

A poster, designed to publicise the project and recruit narrators, was exhibited in public libraries and community centres in South Tyneside (see Appendix 3) and issued to members of NARPO to assist in snowballing. Two narrators were recruited with this method.

A member of NARPO had possession of the 'South Shields Police Applications and Appointments Book' and permitted access to this document.³³ The book contains details of men and women appointed to the South Shields Borough Police Force from 1847-1968. It includes information such as their height, former occupation and address. Being equipped with the details entered in the Appointments Book, a series of internet searches was performed leading to the successful recruitment of three narrators. One was a committee member of a local rugby club; another had postgraduate work published on the internet; the last was a councillor and former mayor of South Tyneside, who facilitated the recruitment of eight others via snowballing.

There is the concern that people endorsed by snowballing would be linked by their relationship with their sponsor into a similar population class, that their recommendation would produce narrators of: similar rank; similar length of service; that reflect the sponsors' social activities and values (e.g. being a Freemason).³⁴ However, those recruited by snowballing were of various ranks and more akin to being acquaintances than friends, and many were not members of NARPO. The bond that allowed snowballing was based upon having been in the 'borough' rather

³² The *Shields Gazette* can be accessed via the internet.

³³ The facsimile is now in South Shields Local Studies Library and the original in Tyne and Wear Archives.

³⁴ Alan Bryman. *Social Research Methods*. 3rd edition. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

than any other socio-grouping. The two most successful recruitment methods were snowballing and directly approaching members at NARPO meetings.

Table 1: Method of recruiting narrators

Method of recruitment	Amount recruited
Snowballing	14
NARPO Meeting	13
Internet Search	3
Newspaper Article	2
Poster	2
Total	34

The retrieval of three interview transcripts completed in 1994 increased the total amount of individuals interviewed to 36. A narrator interviewed in 1994 was also interviewed in 2010. It was interesting to note that although there was a 16-year gap between interviews there were only minor differences in responses provided to questions that had been repeated.³⁵

Representation of the narrators

Between August 1947 and September 1968, 308 men and women are recorded in the Appointments Book as having been employed by South Shields Borough Police Force; two individuals left the force and later re-joined.³⁶ There was also a transitional period of two months, from July 1968 to October 1968, when South Shields Borough Police Force supervised 59 men of the River Tyne Police, also subjected to amalgamation into Durham Constabulary. Six officers from the River Tyne Police transferred into South Shields Borough Police in July 1968.³⁷ The remainder eventually became part of the new Durham Constabulary Marine

³⁵ The differences were in detail such as dates or specific names, for example of the police surgeon who interviewed him. 1st and 3rd Interview with SB.

³⁶ South Shields Borough Police Applications and Appointments Book, (hereafter Appointments Book) South Shields Local Studies Library.

³⁷ The River Tyne Police only employed men.

Division.³⁸ The total number of officers recorded as appointed to the South Shields Borough Police Force from August 1947 to the period immediately prior to amalgamation in 1968 was 314.³⁹ A lack of access to other trace documents meant the Appointments Book was significant in providing details of recruits. However, whilst valuable, such information was limited as it did not include educational qualifications or details of those who failed the application process. Nonetheless, the data was able to provide a basis for research on personnel issues discussed in this work.

In total, 28 women police officers were appointed to South Shields Borough Police Force from 1947-1968.⁴⁰ The number of women officers in the authorised establishment of the force had slowly increased over this period. At the time of amalgamation there were 11 employed (two sergeants and nine constables) with one vacancy being carried.⁴¹ There were only five women constables in 1947.⁴² The role of uniform beat patrol was male dominated; police women were isolated within their own department, with female supervision and specific duties.⁴³

The time constraints of the project, as well as responses to key questions becoming iterative, were a deciding factor in halting the recruitment of narrators. Nevertheless, the sample size represents 11.3% of the officers recorded as appointed to South Shields Borough Police Force between 1947 and the amalgamation with Durham Constabulary in October 1968. Officers could transfer into and out of South Shields Borough Police Force and consequently, the range of experience from other police forces in which the narrators had worked included Durham County Constabulary, Durham Constabulary, Edinburgh City Police, the Kenyan Police Force, The River Tyne Police and Sunderland Borough Police Force.

While consideration was given to the amount of participants to ensure a breadth of experience was captured the sample needed to represent a range of constables

³⁸ Figures obtained from the "Nominal Index of the South Shields Borough Police Force and the River Tyne Police" from August 1968. Private collection of J Buglass.

³⁹ As the project progressed it became apparent that there were members of the force who had been omitted, these appear to have been transferees from other forces.

⁴⁰ Appointments Book.

⁴¹ HMICAR, 1967.

⁴² HMICAR, 1947.

⁴³ A good overview of the role of policewomen is provided by Jackson, 2006.

who joined the police at various years from 1947-1968. Thus, it was more important for the sample to be a 'quota sample' that broadly represented recruiting to the police, rather than a 'probability sample' that would be used to calculate the representativeness of statements made by respondents. As Thompson states, "for many projects, on an event, or about a small group of people, the issue is not representativeness, but who knows best; above all, participants and direct witnesses".⁴⁴

In recording the life stories, the focus was on the delivery of service to the public during a period of significant change to governance and technology within the police, and changes in society as a whole. One hypothesis in assessing the potential changes to the culture of policing is that the level of discipline endured by constables would modify in tandem with transformations experienced in wider society, such as the reduced level of military experience (by the ending of national service in 1960) and the greater lack of deference shown to authority by society. In order to test this, and other theories, it was necessary to review the experiences of officers who had experienced military service prior to becoming constables, compared to those who had not. Another factor relevant to the research was to compare the attitudes and opinions of those officers who joined in the latter stages of the period 1947-1968 with those who joined earlier. A demarcation for this purpose was the year 1958; narrators' experience of war and military service was rare in those who joined the police after 1959.

The sample of narrators represents a good spread over the period subject to the research. It allows for a comparison of experience over a period of 21 years during three decades. However, the sample would have been improved by the experience of those who did not remain in the police force, e.g. because of dismissal, injury or leaving for other employment. Nonetheless, the current sample consisted of those who 'stayed the course' and therefore had a longer 'chain' of traditional experiences compared to those who departed early.

⁴⁴ Thompson, 2000, 151.

Table 2: The years in which narrators were appointed

Note: This table is inclusive of those interviewed in 1994.

Year	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959	1960	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968
Men	3	1			2	1		1	1	1	1		3	2		2	4	5	4	1		
Women									1				1						1		1	

Oral history and construction of the narratives

Oral history is a process of conducting interviews to gain information about past events. It is also about how that information is recorded, analysed, and interpreted, “it is the practice as well as the output”.⁴⁵ The interpretation of the narrative by my translation will always pose the question, to what extent has information, meaning or communication been lost in translation? Any errors in translation rest with me. The value of oral history method in the current work is the scope it provides narrators to express their feelings, attitudes, opinions and stories of past experience. The information gained is the result of a dialogue between individuals, the interviewer and the narrator, each of whom has a part to play in the interaction developed to create the eventual outcome. Thus, the creation of oral history is a joint or shared undertaking. The position adopted in creating a relationship for the oral history interviews was that of a shared authority; where both the interviewer and narrator could create the historical record together; the information being “produced in a dialogue between individuals”.⁴⁶ The two participants in an interview have unique roles in the process. One seeks to give an account and the other seeks to facilitate the account. There is a given purpose and direction to the interview process however, there is also a “level of subjectivity inherent in qualitative research”.⁴⁷

The interviewer influences the route taken in an interview by the use of probing questions that delve into particular subjects to gain a response. In developing that direction, the narrator will construct and compose their performance of a story in a way that makes sense to them, and their inner

⁴⁵ Abrams, 2.

⁴⁶ Michael Frisch. *A Shared Authority*. (Albany: University of New York Press, 1990), 61.

⁴⁷ Yow, 2005, 4.

'self'. The perceived identity individuals have of themselves and how they see 'their' identity fitting into the wider world, influences how they compose their narration.⁴⁸ Similarly, individuals have a sense of self as a continuously existing entity; seeing themselves as what they were, recalling particular events as occurring in a sequence to themselves, within their self image, the image of their own identity.⁴⁹ This identity and self image may change over time.

This in turn may affect the course and outputs of the interview. In an interview the individual's 'subjectivity' and identity, formed and shaped by experience and perception (the "individual's personal baggage"), meets with the subjectivity of the researcher.⁵⁰ Thus, the issue of intersubjectivity, the dynamics of the interview process where there is an engagement between two subjectivities to pursue the creation of the oral testimony has to be negotiated. In order to achieve a professional outcome from this process, there was a need, as the interviewer, to constantly reflect and evaluate the dynamics of the interview and recognise the influence that social interaction with the narrator added to the process. This process, defined as 'Reflexivity', was a constant companion during the interview process.⁵¹

Interviews are controlled conversations with a shared purpose. They allow the narrator to disclose their account of events, their perceptions, opinions and attitudes towards those events, and provide a composed and constructed narrative while controlling disclosure during free recall. This level of freedom, whilst ensuring the narrator has sufficient scope to give their story, raises the question of authenticity. The oral historian in the interview places an onus on the narrator to tell the truth as they see it, or place the emphasis on the "truth of the telling, rather than the telling of the truth".⁵² The object is to obtain an authentic account from the narrator of their perspective. Yow expresses her experience that narrators who are no longer in careers will be more candid in providing detail, as they now have less

⁴⁸ Penny Summerfield. *Reconstructing Womens Wartime Lives*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), 16-23.

⁴⁹ Shils, 49.

⁵⁰ Abrams, 176.

⁵¹ Reflexivity is the act of consciously thinking about one's presuppositions and how these might affect the conduct of one's research. Ibid.

⁵² Abrams, 46.

to lose by an untoward admission.⁵³ However, there will be occasions when a narrator finds gaps in their construction of events and they may fill these by the use of confabulation.⁵⁴

It is recognised that narrators construct and compose their stories to fit with their sense of 'self'. When a person has an experience, it is created in their memory set. When they wish to recall the memory, they recreate it.⁵⁵ Therefore, what narrators provide are recreated memories reshaped over time to fit with their inner sense of self. The recreation can be influenced by changes in society or the image society creates for a particular era or event, the force of collective memory; one being the public image of policing.⁵⁶ Equally, as the individual begins to come to terms with an event, they recreate it under the auspices of their 'new composure'. Recalling events that generate trauma or confusion to the narrator at the time of creation may enable a phase of closure in accordance with the changing sense of self and composition. By telling the story of a traumatic event it can be "drained of some of its toxicity".⁵⁷ This notion was evident when narrators experienced surges of emotion in recalling traumatic incidents they had rarely shared with others.

In essence, oral history is concerned with the collection of stories from witnesses relating to events. These are fashioned by the narrators who reconstruct their memories as it relates to their 'self' now. The crucial cognitive activities involved in self-construction may seem much more like thinking than memory.⁵⁸ Oral history testimony cannot therefore replicate an exact memory of the past. However, the basic tests of reliability, when analysing the responses gained from such testimony are those of searching for internal consistency, cross checking details from other sources, weighing evidence against a wider context; they are "just the same as for other sources".⁵⁹

⁵³ Yow, 2005, 20.

⁵⁴ Shepherd, 84f.

⁵⁵ Ibid, 45.

⁵⁶ Alessandro Portelli describes an insight into the complexities of such memory in a community.

Alessandro Portelli, *The Order Has Been Carried Out*. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).

⁵⁷ Klemperer, 201.

⁵⁸ Quoted in Geoffrey Cubitt, *History and Memory*, (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2007), 92.

⁵⁹ Thompson, 2000, 153.

Oral history provides a mechanism for opening up social worlds of the police that have been closed to us. A debate has emerged between the value traditional historians place on trace history being held by them in greater esteem, due to the influence of the ruling “paradigm of scientific modernism, which is an academic culture of objectivity”.⁶⁰ Thus, there is a view that trace history is valued as objective and oral history as subjective. However, when used as a standalone methodology or in conjunction with trace methods, oral history can create a more comprehensive picture of a social era.⁶¹

Problems can emerge when researching police history as many official documents have either been lost or destroyed.⁶² Many documents were considered as expendable in their own time and were treated accordingly.⁶³ The records of the Metropolitan Police, who reported directly to the Home Secretary, were governed by the Public Records Act and are in a relatively good state of preservation. On the other hand, police forces outside of London did not report directly to the Home Secretary and were therefore not covered by the Act. Thus, the documentary evidence available can be poor.⁶⁴ An example of police documents being lost includes the discipline book for South Shields Borough Police. This book recorded all the official sanctions delivered to police officers deemed to have committed breaches of discipline. Whilst now lost, in 1994 it was examined as part of a study into the working environment of constables during the 1960s and a profile of discipline offences and associated findings was prepared.⁶⁵ Police officers were subject to a variety of forms of discipline; not all were recorded in official documents.⁶⁶

Most minutes of watch committee meetings are stored in the Tyne and Wear Archives and an assortment of chief constable’s annual reports are housed at the South Shields Local History Library. Interestingly the chief constable’s notes of preparation for watch committee meetings refer to many issues not appearing in

⁶⁰ Cockcroft, 2005, 366.

⁶¹ Ibid, 367.

⁶² Chris A Williams, ed, *Giving the Past a Future*, (London: Francis Boutle Publishers, 2004).

⁶³ Shils, 80.

⁶⁴ Williams, 2004, 57.

⁶⁵ Lock and Rigg, 1994.

⁶⁶ Brogden, 1991; Klein, 2010; Weinberger, 1995.

the official minutes. This illustrates that officially recorded documents do not always reflect the matters discussed.⁶⁷

Recall and memory

The narrators were encouraged to give free recall (uninterrupted time to express their account), by delivering appropriate questions and ensuring that good listening skills were employed.⁶⁸ This often resulted in the provision of new emerging themes, which proved to be a source of new research material. The retrieval of memory was facilitated by placing the narrator in context, by locating them back to relive the experience, or prompting them for further details by asking probing questions surrounding the event to elicit greater retrieval whilst in free recall. Other tactics used to place the narrator in context included placing them back into the scene a second time, once an initial response had been given. These approaches form part of the 'enhanced cognitive interview', a means of extracting detail during free recall, used in the social sciences and forensic interviews.⁶⁹ This method of memory retrieval is particularly useful as a research technique for qualitative researchers, including its use in oral history.⁷⁰ Placing the narrator into context accounts for up to 80 per cent of additional information received when using the cognitive interview.⁷¹ Rapport is invaluable in this process, as accurate memory is "much more likely when it meets a social interest and need".⁷²

Often the physical actions of the narrator indicated that they were 'in context'. Examples include where the narrator described a location and pointed to it, and when discussing a radio call held an imaginary radio to their ear. One narrator donated a movie to the project of road scenes in South Shields from 1951 (the footage was filmed from a moving car). In free recall lasting nearly eight minutes he provided commentary whilst watching a silent version of the footage as a prompt. It was clear that he was 'in context' when he made comments such as

⁶⁷ Reports to the Watch Committee by the Chief Constable for the period 1956 – 1967 (TWAR T179/591 – 593 refers).

⁶⁸ Shepherd, 31.

⁶⁹ Ibid, 26.

⁷⁰ Peter A J Waddington, and Ray Bull. "Cognitive Interviewing as a Research Technique." *Social Research Update* (University of Surrey), no. 50 (2007).

⁷¹ Shepherd, 25.

⁷² Thompson, 2000, 132.

“the car we are driving in”, whilst mimicking the use of a steering wheel.⁷³

Prompts, such as photographs, can be useful to encourage memory recall.⁷⁴

Although none were used in this work, some narrators had photographs and documents they referred to whilst giving their narrative.

Many of the questions posed to the narrators were in relation to the routine duties they carried out. Examples include foot patrol; using police boxes and pillars; contact with the public; easing behaviour; and incident investigation. Narrators were asked to recall events that were ‘unique common experiences’ such as the process of joining the police, initial training, and the introduction of new technology that became routine with use; including mobile ‘panda’ patrols and the operation of personal radios. The recall of daily routines did not appear to be problematic, although specific detail of routine work was sometimes difficult to remember. For example, the ability to recall how an arrest was made and processed was not difficult, but to remember a ‘specific’ routine arrest such as ‘drunk and disorderly’, proved at times difficult. Nonetheless, there was far more clarity when episodic memory was triggered on events that were clearly uncommon such as being assaulted or dealing with a serious incident.⁷⁵ It has been argued that “an event is likely to endure in memory if it is perceived as highly emotional at the time of its occurrence” and if the subsequent course of events appear to have been a turning point of some sort.⁷⁶ However, due to the unique mix of detail, episodic memory is by nature idiosyncratic.⁷⁷

Communication and ethical issues with the narrators

Narrators were provided with an in-depth information booklet prior to the interviews. This contained concise relevant information and forms covering protocols of consent, copyright and the acquisition of artefact materials donated by

⁷³ *South Shields Road Safety*. 1950, commentary recorded by Kevin Rigg. Produced by Northern Region Film and Television Archive. 2010.

⁷⁴ Such prompts stimulate memory. Yow, 2005, 264-266.

⁷⁵ Episodic memory relates to the recall of one-off incidents or episodes. Because they have particular features and people vary in what they pay attention to, individual episodic memory is idiosyncratic. Shepherd, 38.

⁷⁶ Marigold Linton quoted in Alice M Hoffman and Howard S Hoffman, “Memory Theory: Personal and Social” in Charlton, Thomas L, Lois E Myers, and Rebecca Sharpless. *Thinking About Oral History*. (Plymouth: Altamira, 2008), 36.

⁷⁷ Shepherd, 38.

them.⁷⁸ This was important as it has been argued that ‘pure’ oral historians record and make their work available to the public and other researchers for their use.⁷⁹ The booklet aimed to ensure that all narrators were aware of their responsibility to adhere to the Official Secrets Act and to comply with the law in relation to copyright and libel (a copy is attached as accompanying material). Other functions of the booklet included the application of an ethical approach; ensuring that decisions, consent and participation were given freely; that narrators understood the purpose of the research; and what would happen to the material they provided.

The booklet explained there was a risk of anxiety to the narrator when recalling traumatic or emotional events. However, they were informed not to “place themselves at such risk merely for the sake of the researcher”.⁸⁰ The nature of police work can be traumatic and several interviews were suspended allowing narrators to compose themselves, following surges of emotion.

There was a good deal of communication with the narrator prior to the actual interview. This provided an opportunity to give information about the interview process, to ensure they were fully informed of their legal rights, and that any concerns they had were addressed. The information booklet also provided a series of answers to frequently asked questions.

Evaluation of the techniques employed

This work does not seek to give an overall representation of the history of policing in South Shields from 1947-1968. Obvious gaps such as the lack of accounts from criminals, victims and witnesses, as well as the wives and partners of the narrators, inhibit the provision of a comprehensive history. This research, therefore, provides a history of how constables encountered and managed changes that altered their traditional working routine whilst performing their duty. It is a history from the constable’s perspective.

⁷⁸ Fifty eight items of uniform, equipment and documents were donated to the local museum, by the narrators.

⁷⁹ Ritchie, 155.

⁸⁰ Kevin Rigg, *South Shields Borough Police Oral History Project: Information for Participants About the Project*. 2010, 7.

The only way an interviewer will know what questions to ask is by having researched the subject.⁸¹ The normal approach to developing research and preparing for oral history interviews is to carry out a review of literature to design relevant questions. However, the timetable of interviews for this work was brought forward by several months due to some potential narrators dying. Whilst a rather macabre reason for bringing forward the interview process, it was reasonable to do so to reduce the risk of other narrators missing the opportunity to contribute.⁸² This meant that the review of literature was on-going during the interview process.

There are limitations to the research. In examining the testimonies of the 36 narrators, it is difficult to assess the extent to which their opinions and experiences represent those of all the police officers appointed. However, the responses of the narrators whilst presenting unique personal experiences also formed a coherent image of policing, allowing a more general overview to be formed. The patterns of evidence were consistent even when obtained from a wide selection of narrators - a sign that the historical account has become credible.⁸³

Those interviewed had a good deal of experience suited to assessing the impact of detraditionalisation. The benefit of having over thirty narrators allowed for the 'wider examination of the traditions of policing', as individual recipients of tradition are seldom adequate judges of the length of their 'chain' of tradition.⁸⁴ There were no civilian staff interviewed, and only one special constable and four women police officers. Of the narrators 15 (41.6%) remained in the rank of constable while the remaining officers were promoted at various stages of their career (eight were promoted to sergeant whilst serving in the borough). Thus, many of the narrators had to negotiate the process of promotion in constructing their narratives. This assisted the research as it allowed for the issue of promotion and selection to specialist posts to be discussed, as well as how sergeants supervised constables.

Whilst the perceived limitations of oral testimonies are noted, they should be viewed in light of the benefit of the unique evidence they provide on the day-to-day activities of a constable working within what was a working community closed to

⁸¹ Ritchie, 87.

⁸² Several of the narrators were elderly and ill.

⁸³ Thompson, 2000, 288.

⁸⁴ Shils, 14.

public access. Their opinions, misdeeds, official and unofficial work methods have been revealed for public scrutiny. Such revelations suggest the impact of the use of oral history methods was an apt choice.

Narrators also gave accounts of their career history and experiences since retiring from the police, including: investigating serious incidents and serial murders; terrorism; gathering intelligence; working with the SIS (Secret Intelligence Service) and Special Branch. Four of the narrators retired in the rank of superintendent or chief superintendent and two as chief inspectors. The duties of these officers became strategic in their latter police service and included working with the FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation), New York City Police, the RUC (Royal Ulster Constabulary) as well as making decisions on high profile cases under the auspices of PACE (the Police and Criminal Evidence Act).

Whilst advice had been given prior to the interview, both in the information booklet and in pre interview discussions, some narrators divulged experiences, opinions and information, that could place them at risk of breaching confidentiality or of committing libel. Examples include claiming that other named officers regularly assaulted prisoners, the status of individuals within the command of the IRA (Irish Republican Army), claims that various officers were engaged in physical fights with each other, incidents where officers were named but the narrator did not witness the events. In such cases, a joint or unilateral decision to remove sections from the transcripts accessed by the public and to restrict audio recordings for a given period (ten years) was made. This action aimed to protect the narrator and researcher from any potential legal action or retribution, to ensure their reputations receive a level of protection, and to protect those who may have been falsely accused. This process is an important feature of the administration of the personal memories given in good faith, which could easily damage the reputation of both the researcher and the narrator. Although anonymity was offered to all narrators, none opted to make use of it.

Narrators were provided full original copies of the transcripts, information sheets and a copy of the audio recording; they were able to keep these. They were asked to check transcripts for accuracy and to confirm their satisfaction with the content. Due to the large amount of text created NVIVO 9 software was employed as a

coding tool for categories of questions that were asked or emerged in the interviews. A paper based coding system would have been very time consuming and present a risk that relevant material would be missed during the coding process, this was significantly reduced with the use of software.

The creation of the oral testimonies provides an insight into how the police worked in South Shields and the North East of England between 1947 and the 1990s. They assist in identifying detraditionalisation in the methods of policing and the opinions of those who experienced them. The following chapters will highlight how the process of detraditionalisation emerged as narrators approached their duties, viewed changes in society and police technology and where they saw their place within these processes.

Chapter 3: South Shields, the detraditionalisation of the town and the development of its police forces

Introduction

The location chosen as a case study to examine the detraditionalisation of policing in the period 1947-1968 is South Shields in the north east of England. To gain an understanding of local and regional issues that influenced the detraditionalisation of the town, and hence its police, an appreciation is required of the development of: its economy; post-war rebuilding; and how its constables and police forces related to it. It is also important to have an understanding of the nature of its community and the natural dangers it presented as a coastal town. Chapter one outlined how detraditionalisation occurred in wider society. This chapter seeks to outline key aspects of social and economic change relevant to the town of South Shields, the development of its police, and the extent the constables it recruited were associated with the town.

South Shields the town

The town of South Shields, situated on the southern mouth of the River Tyne in the north east of England was part of County Durham. However, following local government reorganisation in 1974, the town is now in the Metropolitan Borough of South Tyneside, Tyne and Wear. It is 11 miles to the east of the dominant city of the River Tyne, Newcastle, and eight miles north of Sunderland. South Shields is surrounded by water on two of its three sides, the River Tyne to the north, and the North Sea to the east. London is 285 miles to the south and Edinburgh 137 miles to the north, not so different to the distance of the first large city to the south, Leeds (see Figure 1).

The landward boundary of the town follows a south easterly route from the River Tyne, west of the deep-sea port of Tyne Dock to the coast. The coastline consists of long sandy beaches and a growing cliff face up to 100 feet in height that spreads south topped by an area of open grassland 500 yards wide and two miles long, known as 'The Leas'. Dispersed along the shoreline are several rocky bays accessible during low tide, at high tide they

are submerged, presenting a source of danger to the unwary; and a focal point for cliff and sea rescues that were carried out by the South Shields borough police. There is an area of green belt between the neighbouring towns of Jarrow to the west and Sunderland to the south. By 1971 continued urban development had reduced the gap between the conurbation of Sunderland and South Tyneside to two miles.¹

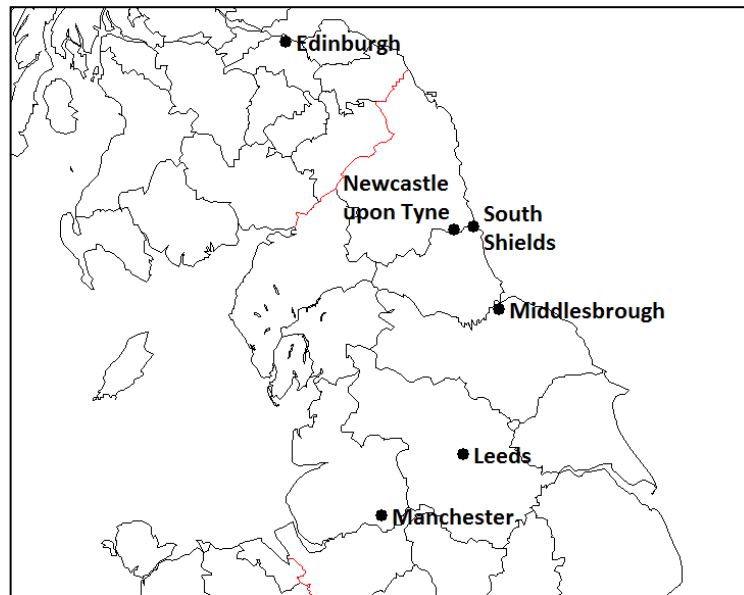


Figure 1: The location of South Shields in the north of England

Note: Map indicates county boundaries in existence in 1947, created with GenMap software.

Ferry services operated across the River Tyne. One sailed between North and South Shields transporting foot and vehicular passengers.² This was the only way to gain access by motor vehicle between the two towns and the counties of Durham and Northumberland, other than travelling via bridges at Newcastle, until the Tyne Tunnel (road access) opened in 1967.³ There has been a pedestrian tunnel between Jarrow and Howden since 1951.⁴ The River Tyne, South Shields and Tynemouth borough police forces jointly policed the ferries.

¹ A E. Smailes *North England*. (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1961).

² Tyne Improvement Commission (hereafter TIC). *Port of Tyne Official Handbook 1957*. (London: Burrows, 1957), 113.

³ Ken Groundwater *Newcastle and the River Tyne*. (Kettering: Silver Link Publishing, 1998), 110.

⁴ TIC, 1957, 114.

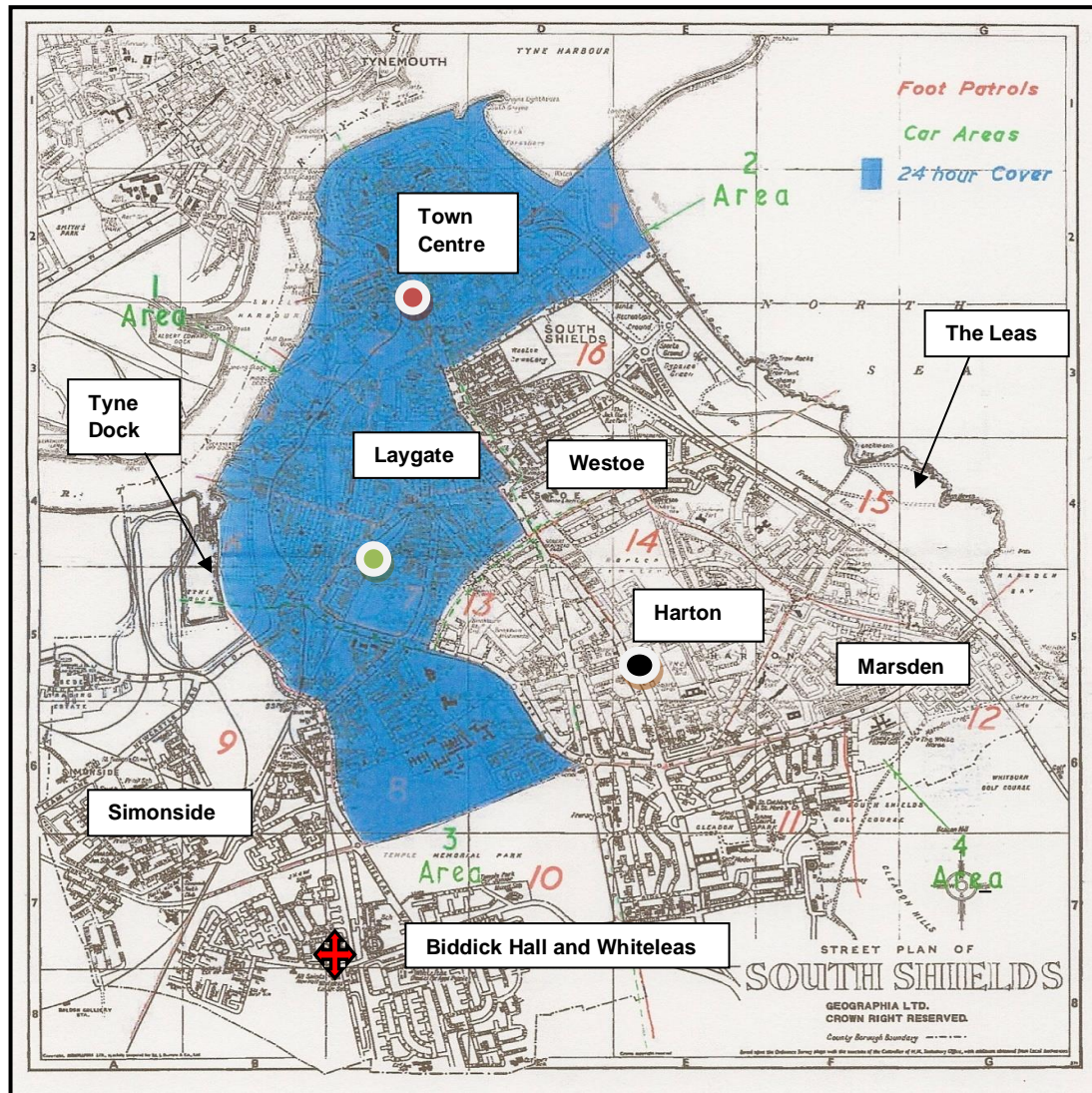


Figure 2: Map issued to police recruits in 1966 amended to show principal housing estates, The Leas and police stations

Note: Keppel Street Police Station = ● West Park Police Station = ● Harton Police Station = ●
 Whiteleas (a large police box with toilet and office facilities) = +. The blue area held the most commercial property and given 24-hour cover.
 Source: Private collection C Appleby.

The area immediately to the west and south of South Shields contain the towns and villages of Jarrow, Hebburn, Cleadon and Whitburn. These were outside the administrative remit of South Shields borough police; Durham County Constabulary policed them.

South Shields followed a typical route to gain recognition as a town. As towns grew in size and population in the early nineteenth-century there was a desire to form them into organised, governed entities. A body of Improvement Commissioners formed in October 1828 oversaw the

development of issues such as paving, lighting, cleansing, watching (protecting), regulating and improving the town.⁵ In 1832 the town received parliamentary borough status; it became a municipal borough on 3 September 1850, leading to the establishment of a town council and watch committee to oversee policing. It was created a county borough on 1 April 1889.⁶ By 1967, South Shields had a population in excess of 107,000 and covered an area of 4876 acres (7.6 square miles).⁷

The economy and the social composition of the town

In 1957 Tyne Dock, situated two miles from the harbour entrance, covered an area of 300 acres of waterfront, timber storage and warehousing.⁸ The Tyne Improvement Commission (TIC), formed in 1850, governed the port; it became the Port of Tyne Authority in 1968.⁹ It was responsible for the management of the river and two enclosed docks, Tyne Dock in South Shields and Albert Edward Dock in North Shields. The two principal imports were timber and iron ore. In 1956, the timber consisted of 133,604 tons of pit props and 155,818 tons for general use.¹⁰

The most important export was coal, transported to Tyne Dock via various rail networks and deposited in collier ships at 26 coal staiths. However, during the post-war period the coal shipping industry was in decline. In 1938, 12.7 million tons of coal a year was exported, in 1950, the figure dropped to 9.4 million and by 1972, it had reduced to 2.2 million.¹¹ Tyne Dock Staiths closed in 1967.¹² There were two collieries in the town in 1947, Westoe and Harton. The Second World War temporarily revived coal mining and transitory economic security was provided when collieries were nationalised

⁵ George. B. Hodgson, *The Borough of South Shields*, (Newcastle: Andrew Reid and Co, 1903), 146.

⁶ South Tyneside Council, *South Shields a Story of a Town and Its People*, (South Shields: South Tyneside Council, 1975), 15.

⁷ HMICAR, 1967.

⁸ TIC, 1957, 14.

⁹ Port of Tyne Authority. *Port of Tyne 1996 – 1997 Handbook*. (Gloucester: The British Publishing Company, 1997), 10.

¹⁰ TIC, 1957, 33.

¹¹ South Tyneside Council, 27.

¹² Ibid.

in 1947.¹³ However, Harton closed in 1969 and Westoe Colliery followed in 1990. In 1960, the two collieries employed 2,592 people.¹⁴ Mining and shipyard communities were integral to the town. The collieries caused no particular policing problems, other than the legal requirement to check explosives and to deal with occasional sudden deaths and industrial accidents.

The town had 11 dry docks, used for building and repairing ships.¹⁵ The shipyards employed a wide range of trades and craftsmen, some titles of which readily identified them as belonging to shipyard work, such as 'caulkers'. However, many titles were universal: upholsterers, plumbers, fitters, etc. It is therefore difficult to identify the numbers specifically employed in the shipbuilding industry. The main form of employment of men in the town in 1951 was engineering (13.7% or 6,440).¹⁶ As with the coal industry, the eventual decline of the shipyards occurred during the 1970s and 1980s, shipbuilding work relocated elsewhere as the size of the dry docks in South Shields were unable to accommodate the larger ships manufactured.¹⁷

The crews of ships arriving in the Tyne would often remain with their ship whilst it was in dock. The local novelist Catherine Cookson argued that "drink or rent arrears drove many a woman to prostitution, and the dockland areas of the Tyne, with their large numbers of transient males with money, were particularly popular haunts".¹⁸ The public houses of the Tyne Dock and riverside areas were the traditional haunts of prostitutes.

Tyne Dock attracted seamen from the Baltic area transporting cargoes of timber, and Arab sailors (mainly stokers) from the Yemen. The first South Shields Arab boarding house was established in 1906; they were subjected

¹³ Natasha Vall. "Regionalism and Cultural History: The Case of North-Eastern England, 1918-1976" in *Regional Identities in North-East England, 1300-2000* edited by Adrian Green and A.J. Pollard, 181-287. Woodbridge: The Bodley Press, 2007. 196.

¹⁴ <http://www.dmm.org.uk/colliery/h005.htm> Accessed 6 June 2011

¹⁵ TIC, 1957, 24.

¹⁶ General Register Office. *Census 1951: County Report Durham*. (London: HMSO, 1954).

¹⁷ South Tyneside Council, 27.

¹⁸ Catherine Cookson, *Catherine Cookson Country*. (London: Heinemann, 1986), 122.

to police inspection through to the early 1960s.¹⁹ The settlement of the Arab community had grown by the mid-twentieth century and instigated the emergence of shops selling Arab and Asian food, particularly in the Laygate area. However, the profusion of Bangladeshi and Indian restaurants that were to serve the night time economy of the town (and the 'easing' activities of the police) did not emerge until 1967.²⁰ By the post-war period, the Arab community had integrated into the wider community of the town.²¹ Oral testimony indicates that the relationship between them and the police was convivial.²²

Industry occupied a narrow strip of land along the riverside in South Shields, where terraced housing intermixed with factories less dependent on river transport.²³ A substantial industrial estate, the 'Bede Industrial Estate', was located on the boundary between South Shields and Jarrow to the west of Tyne Dock. By 1970, this covered 73 acres and contained 17 firms employing 4000 people.²⁴ This industrial estate was isolated from housing and required extensive property checks by the police. Other principal industries in the town were heavy engineering, manufacturing and associated seagoing businesses such as ship-chandlers. There was also a small but productive tourist industry developed around the seaside.²⁵

Over reliance on heavy industries and a failure to diversify into other business sectors weakened the region's economic stability. A government review of the North East economy, published in 1963, found the imbalance of the region's industries resulted in economic decline.²⁶ It reported that in 1962, 34 per cent of the main jobs in the region depended on coal mining, shipbuilding, chemicals and metal manufacture. This compared to a 12 per

¹⁹ Richard. I. Lawless, *From Ta'izz to Tyneside*, (Exeter: Exeter University Press, 1995), 10.

²⁰ Padma Roa and Brian Lewis, *Desh Videsh Home and Abroad*, (South Shields: Hindu Nari Sangh, 2003), 8.

²¹ There had been a series of race riots surrounding marine employment in 1919 and 1930. See Neil Evens, "Across the Universe: Racial Violence and the Post-War Crisis in Imperial Britain, 1919 – 1925." *Immigrants and Migrants* 13 (1994) 59-88. And Lawless, 153.

²² 1st Interview FD.

²³ Smailes, 206.

²⁴ Port of Tyne Authority, 1970, 87.

²⁵ South Tyneside Council, 41.

²⁶ Home Office. *The North East: A Programme for Regional Development and Growth*. Cmnd. 2206. (London: HMSO, 1963).

cent dependence on those industries in the whole of Great Britain.²⁷ These industries were liable to fluctuations in the demand for labour and an overcapacity in the world market made them vulnerable. In the decade following 1952, employment in shipbuilding had fallen by 16 per cent.²⁸

The most obvious symptom of the economic situation for the North East was its rate of male unemployment.²⁹ This had consistently been above the national average. The situation had been improving for several years from 1951 and in 1957 the regional unemployment rate of 1.7 per cent was barely above the national level. However, a gap began to grow. In 1962 when the national figure was 2.4 per cent, in the North East it was 4.5 per cent.³⁰ The number of men in employment in the region was scarcely higher than ten years previously.³¹ The rate of unemployment in South Shields in 1951 was 5.6 per cent whilst nationally it was 1.4 per cent. Throughout the period subject to this study the rate of unemployment in the town was invariably double that of the national average.³²

Post-war development of the town

Much of the housing in South Shields was of a unique design, an unusual variant of a terraced house known as 'Tyneside flats', which had a limited geographical distribution on both banks of the River Tyne. Tyneside flats formed a significant part of the total housing stock in South Shields. They consisted of two storey terraces, each storey containing a separate flat, of two or three rooms.³³ During the Second World War, aside from the high proportion of servicemen who lost their lives (156 people were killed and 564 injured in the town through bombing), over 3,000 people were made homeless. In 1950 rehousing was a pressing issue for the town council.

²⁷ Ibid, 10.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ The government identified the 'North East Region' for the purposes of regional development as Northumberland, County Durham and the North Riding of Yorkshire.

³⁰ Home Office, 1963, 8.

³¹ The increase in male employment in Great Britain 1952-1962 was 6.7 per cent in the Northern Region it was 0.8 per cent. Ibid, 8.

³² Figures to calculate this rate obtained from: General Register Office. *Census 1951. County Report Durham*. (London: HMSO, 1954); General Register Office. *Census 1961: County Report Durham*. (London: HMSO, 1963); Population Censuses and Surveys Office. *Census 1971: County Reports Parts 1 to 3*. (London: HMSO, 1972).

³³ John Burnett, *A Social History of Housing*, 2nd edition. (London: Routledge 1986), 78.

During the following 11 years, 31 slum areas were cleared involving 3,434 families. Low-rise flats (never exceeding three or four storeys) and traditional semi-detached dwellings replaced them.³⁴

The town expanded, with new housing estates constructed to the south and west at Biddick Hall, Simonside, Whiteleas and Marsden. The length of streets grew from 128 miles in 1947, to 168 miles by 1964.³⁵ There were 7,000 new council houses built in the 1950s, in the 1960s, housing development continued and 12,000 houses were constructed by 1970. Of the 35,000 households in South Shields in 1971, over 16,000 were council built.³⁶ Yet even in 1971, housing conditions were still poor on Tyneside.³⁷ In 1971, nearly 14 per cent of dwellings (4,835) had no fixed bath or showers and were reliant on using public facilities or a portable tin bath for bathing. Whilst there had been improvement in the quality of dwellings there were still over 3,000 households using outside or shared toilets.³⁸ Whilst the destruction of dwellings during the war had provided an impetus to rebuild, a compelling motive (for housing reformers) was to lift people out of poverty.³⁹

In 1961, 22 per cent of households in South Shields were owner occupied yet this had increased to 66 per cent by 1971.⁴⁰ The move towards private ownership was a trend reflected in the constables' experience; the officers required to police the expanded area created by new housing, were also residents within them.

Other developments included the opening of one of the first nightclubs in the country outside of London, 'The La Strada', in 1961.⁴¹ The opening of nightclubs, and extensions to drinking hours placed pressure on the police to manage an emerging night time economy. There was also a demand to accommodate the growing number of motor vehicles. In 1956, the first public

³⁴ South Tyneside Council, 25.

³⁵ SSCARs, 1947-1964.

³⁶ David Bean. *Tyneside A Biography*. (Bristol: Western Printing Services), 186.

³⁷ Ibid, 222.

³⁸ Population Censuses and Surveys Office, 1972.

³⁹ Ravetz, 2001, 6.

⁴⁰ Figures derived from General Register Office, 1963; and General Register Office, 1972; the data was unavailable in the 1951 census return.

⁴¹ South Tyneside Council, 29.

car park opened, followed in 1964 by the first multi-storey car park in Tyneside, constructed in the town centre.⁴² The amount of motor vehicles in Great Britain had increased from 6,287,000 in 1956 to 10,336,000 by 1963 (164%); in South Shields, the escalation was from 6,677 to 13,640 (204%).⁴³

Policing the town: the River Tyne Police and the South Shields County Borough Police Force

The Newcastle Port Act 1845 created a body of commissioners including representatives of the riparian authorities of the Tyne; they imposed a tax on vessels entering the port allowing for the maintenance of a river police force, The River Tyne Police.⁴⁴ The passing of the Tyne Improvement Act 1852, led to the creation of the TIC which became responsible for the river and its police. The River Tyne Police headquarters were located in South Shields.⁴⁵ The duties of the force included responsibility for the policing of the docks on both sides of the river on foot and in launches; and the monitoring of fire prevention, understandable considering the amount of timber, oil and petroleum they stored.⁴⁶ There were clear links between the governance of the River Tyne Police and South Shields Borough Council; a member of the South Shields watch committee was also a member of the TIC.⁴⁷ The establishment of The River Tyne Police expanded under its last chief constable to include a detective department. In August 1968, when the force was decommissioned its officers transferred to South Shields Borough Police Force, under the auspices of amalgamation in the Police Act 1964.⁴⁸

The development of a police force for South Shields followed a chronology typical of most borough forces. One of the duties of the Improvement

⁴² Ibid, 26.

⁴³ Motor vehicle figures obtained from the Department for Transport Statistics, Table VEH0103 <http://www2.dft.gov.uk/pgr/statistics/datatablespublications/vehicles/licensing/> accessed 3rd June 2011. South Shields figures from the SSCAR, 1957 and The Survey of Transport Needs and Resources on Tyneside. Part V. Goods Vehicles Survey. Published by the Economist Intelligence Unit London, 1965.

⁴⁴ Moffatt, 58.

⁴⁵ Moffatt, 59.

⁴⁶ TIC, 1957, 37.

⁴⁷ Ibid, 7.

⁴⁸ Moffatt, 34.

Commissioners in 1828 was to appoint watchmen sworn as constables.⁴⁹ Twelve were appointed on 17 October 1829, a basis for a future police force.⁵⁰ On receiving parliamentary borough status and becoming a municipal borough on 3 September 1850, a town council and a watch committee were created to oversee the administration of the town and its policing. The police were reorganised into a uniformed body and detailed to patrol the town centre and riverside.⁵¹ The County and Borough Police Act 1856 made the formation of police forces in counties and boroughs mandatory; the government rejected the notion of a national police force in favour of those governed locally.⁵² South Shields was created a County Borough on 1 April 1889 - conferring the same powers of a county council on the town.⁵³

In 1890 the original police station (built in 1840) was condemned. As a result a large police and court building was constructed in Keppel Street, providing courtrooms, a police station, a cell complex and housing for police and their families on the first and second floors.⁵⁴ The building opened on 6 June 1893 and remained as the police headquarters in South Shields until it closed in 1994.⁵⁵ Following the use of temporary police stations during World War Two, two new section stations opened at West Park and Harton in 1952 and 1953 respectively.⁵⁶

There were differences between county and borough forces. From the mid-twentieth century, large county and city forces with populations in excess of 500,000 employed highly qualified staff, and generated programmes of modernisation that influenced central government decisions on policing, usually in their favour.⁵⁷ Their corporate approach provided improved

⁴⁹ Ibid, 147.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid, 186.

⁵² Rawlings, 2002, 139.

⁵³ Hodgson, 1903, 214. Sec 31 of the Local Government Act 1888 made county boroughs administrative centres in themselves.

⁵⁴ Moffatt, 28.

⁵⁵ Hodgson, 1903, 217.

⁵⁶ SSCAR, 1953.

⁵⁷ Noel Boaden. *Urban Policy-Making: Influences on County Boroughs in England and Wales*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971, 12. Lancashire County Constabulary were influential

systems of communication, administration and technology. However, the constables of these forces (and their families) were often transferred within county or city divisions, to suit exigencies of the service; or in response to behaviour deemed to warrant the unwelcome experience of a house move.⁵⁸ A potential benefit of working in a large county was that the constable dealt with a multitude of incidents such as road traffic accidents and crime offences. A borough constable would usually hand over such cases to a specialist unit, such as traffic patrols or the CID. Thus the rural county constable, whilst working in a quieter environment, had the opportunity to develop a wider range of policing skills. The constable in a small borough was restricted to remaining within the confines of the town where opportunities for experiencing different working environments and career development were limited.

In 1947, there were 152 police officers in South Shields, including 122 constables and five policewomen.⁵⁹ They had two motor patrol cars fitted with a wireless radio system, a small traffic department, a CID office and a fingerprint and photography section. Constables worked a beat system that used telephones located in police boxes and pillars introduced in 1930.⁶⁰ They policed a busy town. The social activities open to the public in 1947 included: 12 cinemas; two theatres; 40 dance halls; four billiard halls; and 153 premises licensed for dancing and singing. In addition, there were 190 sales of alcohol licences in force.⁶¹ A variety of gunpowder and explosive stores (mainly for the collieries), petrol storage facilities, seamen's boarding houses and 39 hackney carriages were all subject to police inspection. Detraditionalisation of some of these duties occurred over the following 20 years influenced by changes in social mores. For example the number of cinemas decreased by eight (-66%) and the amount of dance halls by 11 (-27%); changes in social activities were influenced by the relaxing of liquor

in developing radio communications and unit beat policing. Bob Dobson. *Policing in Lancashire 1839-1989*. (Blackpool: Landy Publishing, 1989).

⁵⁸ Weinberger, 1995, 106. And Brogden, 1991, 61, noted cases of transferring constables within large cities as a means of punishment.

⁵⁹ SSCAR, 1947.

⁶⁰ SSCAR, 1930.

⁶¹ SSCAR, 1947

licensing and gambling legislation that allowed for extended opening hours, the introduction of nightclubs and betting shops. The demise of one activity requiring a police inspection, was replaced by another. The town's police were typical of other small borough police forces with similar populations (see Table 3).

Table 3: Borough police forces in England and Wales 1947: populations between 80,000 and 120,000

Source: HMICAR, 1947

Force	Authorised Strength	Population	Population per PC	Vacancies	PCs
Cambridge	120	80260	819	6	98
Rotherham	113	80890	909	30	89
Burnley	153	84160	673.3	48	125
Wigan	118	84750	892	13	95
Southport	120	84880	912.7	11	93
Isle of Ely	114	85226	968.4	33	88
Rochdale	140	86640	780.5	25	111
Grimsby	145	90300	778.5	49	116
Halifax	158	95440	776	22	123
Wallasey	127	99990	970.7	16	103
Ipswich	118	101360	1056	15	96
Newport	182	101610	682	46	149
South Shields	147	102560	840.5	31	122
Oxford	161	103960	793.5	57	131
Northampton	150	105360	893	34	118
York	138	105580	910	10	116
St Helens	149	106420	887	43	120
Blackburn	178	109080	757.5	29	144
Walsall	146	110180	950	44	116
Gateshead	150	114310	893	31	128
Reading	159	114480	887.4	44	129
Preston	152	117290	953.5	19	123
Oldham	177	118420	840	23	141
Average (mean)	144	99267	861	29.5	116

However, as towns and cities varied in size and population South Shields could not (in respect of establishment) be described as typical within the North East Region. Tynemouth borough police covered a far smaller population, whilst Middlesbrough, Sunderland and Newcastle's were

significantly larger and representative of 'city sized' police forces (see Table 4).

Table 4: Borough police forces in north east England 1947

Source: HMICAR, 1947.

Force	Authorised Strength	Population	Population per PC	Vacancies	PCs
Tynemouth	104	65760	773.6	9	85
South Shields	147	102560	840.5	31	122
Gateshead	150	114310	893	31	128
Middlesbrough	215	141710	791.6	50	179
Sunderland	241	179740	898.7	50	200
Newcastle	427	292220	847	51	345
Average (Mean)	214	149383	840.7	37	176.5

South Shields was particularly isolated. There was a road to the west that led to Gateshead, another leading south to Sunderland and an intermittent train service to Newcastle.⁶² There were no major trunk roads running through the town to cause major traffic congestion.⁶³ The notion of isolation was a view shared by Malcolm Young when posted there, from Newcastle, in the 1980s. He noted:

I was bemused when I was posted to South Shields sub-division, an ex-borough area with a peculiarly insular population and no incursion of young people in the numbers which occurred each weekend in the city.⁶⁴

This insularity was an aspect frequently mentioned by narrators. A typical viewpoint being:

We didn't get to know a lot about criminals out of our sphere. South Shields is in the corner, and criminals didn't come in very much. We had to deal with our own criminals. There wasn't much travelling in and out of South Shields, until everyone started getting cars and the criminals got cars as well, they came in then.⁶⁵

The policing of the town was parochial; it had little need to be concerned with wider geographical policing issues. Local criminals and characters, together

⁶² Bean, 181.

⁶³ Oxford and Wigan forces had major roads running through them and allocated constables to regulate traffic at peak times reducing their available strength. Oxford allocated 8 officers to such duties. G Rose. *A Pictorial History of Oxford City Police*. (Oxford: Oxford Publishing Co, 1979), 17. Similarly, the A49 ran through the centre of Wigan. James Fairhurst. *Policing Wigan: The Wigan Borough Police Force 1836-1969*. (Blackpool: Landy Publishing, 1996), 36.

⁶⁴ Young, 311.

⁶⁵ 2nd Interview JH.

with the seamen who arrived in the town, were the interest of the police in South Shields. However, tourists who came during the summer season produced additional pressure, resulting in a small office in The Pier Pavilion Theatre (near the pier) being opened, staffed mainly with special constables.⁶⁶

Crimes in the town were consistently below the national rate of crime in England and Wales until 1966, when a new chief constable was appointed. Crime figures then began to conform to national rates and surpassed them in 1967. That said, such a sharp rise in recorded crimes may indicate a change in recording practices and policies rather than a change in offending behaviour (see Figure 3).

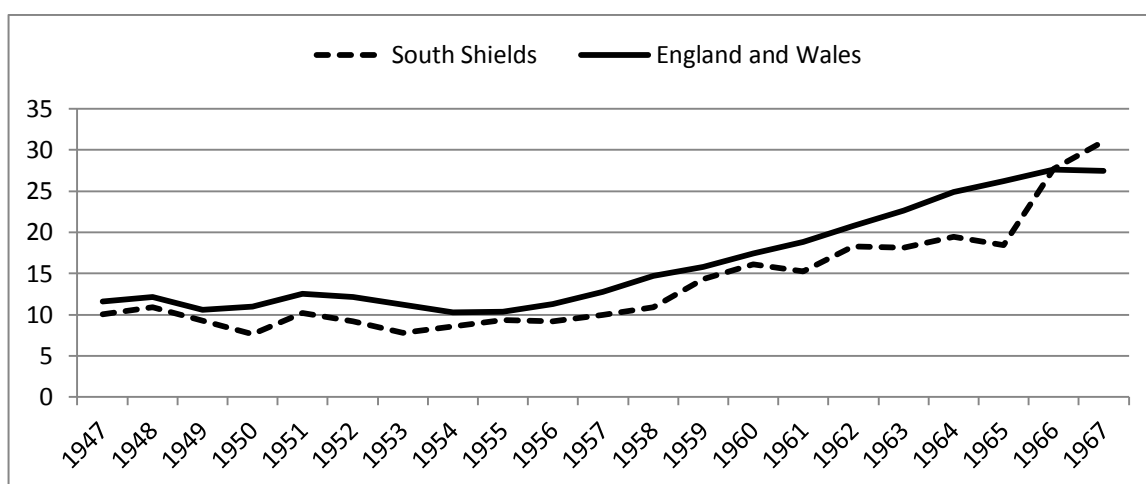


Figure 3: Rates of indictable crimes per thousand population in England and Wales, and South Shields 1947-1967

Source: National Crime Statistics web site and SSCCARs 1947-1967.

The relationship of police recruits to the town

Two constables who joined South Shields Borough Police Force in the period 1908-1917 were still in service during the period 1947-1968.⁶⁷ A further 47 officers who joined the police during 1918-1927 were still serving in 1947-1968. These longer serving police officers were influential in the development of attitudes, opinions and traditional approaches to policing held by those who joined after them. Police culture and tradition nurtured by the

⁶⁶ 1st Interview with FD. The police also used a watchman's hut at the pier head for this purpose.

⁶⁷ Richard Millar and Thomas Humphrey (later chief constable), Appointments Book.

values and attitudes already held by those in the organisation influenced constables new to the job. Recruits would imbibe the traditional approaches to police work when learning how the 'system' worked and how to live in it by observing and assimilating what others did (key components of continuity and change within detraditionalisation).⁶⁸ Narrators suggest that senior constables, who accompanied them during their first tours of duty created the greatest impression in forming their opinion of the police organisation.

There were 518 men and women appointed to the force from 1918-1968.⁶⁹ The majority of these, 416 (80%), served in the period 1947-1968. An examination of their personal data shows where they originated and to what extent their occupations matched those of the community they served. During the inter-war period, a large proportion of recruits originated from Cumberland.

The force at this time had a great number of old hands more gifted with brawn than brains, and replacements were largely from men like me who had retired from the armed forces, a large percentage coming from Cumberland.⁷⁰

The addresses provided by recruits reveal a shift, from being distributed across the whole of the north of England in 1918-1927, to a concentration on the immediate area of South Shields by 1958-1968. It is clear that, prior to World War Two, the preference was to recruit from outside the town. A constable working in the administration department in the early 1950s observed this penchant.

At one time you had single men's quarters and married quarters, because of the restriction on people who were born in South Shields living and policing here. They tended to recruit before the war from outside.⁷¹

During 1918-1927, Cumberland accounted for 35 per cent of recruits to the force. The majority (87%) provided an address within 80 miles of South Shields. Only seven (6.4%) provided addresses in South Shields, and it is unlikely that the remainder would have possessed any in-depth local knowledge of the town.

⁶⁸ Shils, 179.

⁶⁹ Appointments Book.

⁷⁰ Thomas Renton Gordon. *Memories of Thomas Renton Gordon*, (unpublished memoirs, 1976).

⁷¹ 1st Interview BA.

The bulk of recruits in the years following 1927 came from those counties adjacent to South Shields. That is to say, County Durham and Northumberland. The focus on recruiting from the Cumberland area diminished in the inter-war years as suitable recruits were found nearer to the town. By 1958-1968, 96 per cent provided addresses within 11 miles of South Shields (see Figure 4) the remainder lived within 26 miles of the town.⁷² The first significant factor that emerges from a study of the origins of recruits shows there was a steady increase in the 50-year period leading up to 1968 in the proportion of men and women recruited from South Shields (from 6.6% to 69%).

A South Shields man who joined Sunderland Borough Police Force at the end of the Second World War and later transferred into South Shields Borough Police Force, recalled being unable to join his home force:

You weren't allowed in those days to join your local force. Sunderland was the nearest, and of course distance of travel was a thing that influenced me, because living in Cleadon it wasn't so far to travel, that's why I joined the Sunderland force.⁷³

He was fortunate to transfer into South Shields as the then chief constable, Mr Humphrey, held an opinion on recruiting transferees, "I do not favour strengthening one force at the expense of another, without good reason".⁷⁴

In the first half of the twentieth century, forces were reluctant to recruit locally, as chief officers believed there was a benefit derived from external recruits not having a sense of loyalty or solidarity to those they policed.⁷⁵ However, by the inter-war period, there was a greater local identity to policing with more forces appointing locally based recruits.⁷⁶ Police policy for recruiting in the early twentieth century reflected the belief that "the environment in which policemen had grown up and lived prior to being hired by the force was of utmost importance in determining their suitability for the job".⁷⁷

⁷² One officer provided an address at an RAF camp in Lincoln; he was performing national service at the time of application.

⁷³ 1st Interview NB.

⁷⁴ SSCAR, 1954.

⁷⁵ Emsley, 1996, 197.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Shpaya- Makov supports Emsley's argument. Emsley, 1996, 197. And Shpaya-Makov, 2002, 46.

The move towards recruiting constables who lived in the local area began in the period after 1938. The post-war recruiting processes confirmed this alteration and local recruitment became the norm by the end of the 1960s (see Table 5). This change provided the constable with a greater sense of local identity and recognised the efficiency and economic benefit to recruit locally. It also indicated an availability of men and women willing to apply to join the force. Other larger and county forces suffering from a lack of applicants were still required to recruit from outside their area, for example, Lancashire Constabulary recruited heavily from Scotland in 1955.⁷⁸

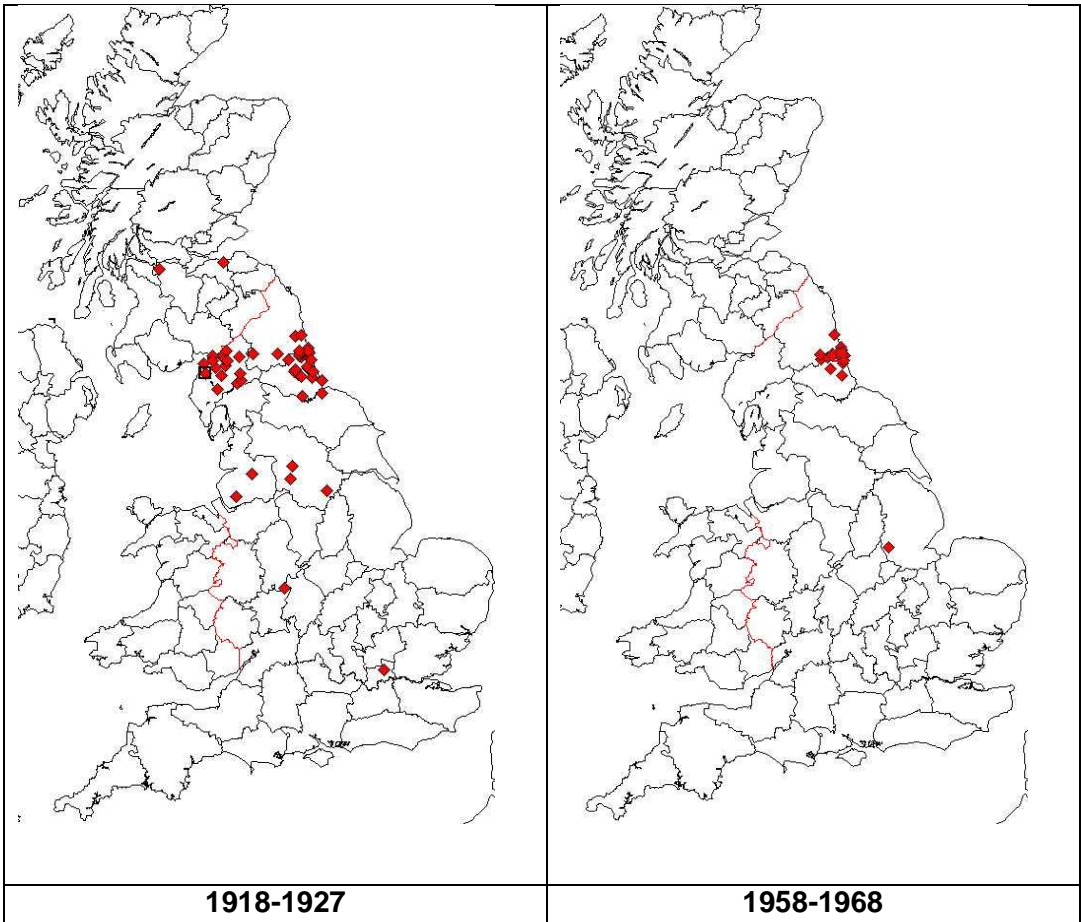


Figure 4: The distribution of addresses provided by recruits between 1918-1927 and 1958-1968

Source: Appointments Book, created with GenMap software.

Addresses provided by recruits in the later periods show that more were living in South Shields; this does not necessarily indicate that they originated from the town. Of the 17 narrators who joined from 1958-1968 who gave South Shields as their address on application, one was visiting relatives from

⁷⁸ Dobson, 70.

Kenya, and two others were temporarily in the town having recently completed naval voyages; trace documents do not always reflect an accurate account.

Table 5: Origins of recruits 1918-1968 showing percentage recruited from South Shields

Source: Appointments Book.

	1918-27	1928-37	1938-47	1948-57	1958-68
Cumberland	37	1	0	0	0
Durham	24	16	19	35	35
Lancashire	2	2	2	0	0
Middlesex	1	0	0	0	0
North Riding Yorkshire	3	3	6	1	0
Northumberland	24	15	12	18	11
Scotland	2	8	2	0	0
South Shields	7 (6.4%)	4 (7.3%)	26 (36%)	73 (56%)	104 (69%)
West Riding Yorkshire	4	1	0	0	0
Other	3	2	3	1	1
Not Known	3	3	2	3	0
Total	110	55	72	131	151

A recruit originating from elsewhere would need to learn the geography and idiosyncrasies of the town. The hidden world of operational policing needed to be understood by all recruits, no matter what their origin. However, it was not simply the geography of the town, but an understanding of its character, the people who lived there, its criminals, social habits, and the experience of 'local knowledge', that every new constable needed to absorb. A new recruit also had to negotiate the official uniformed and plain clothes rank structures; and recognise the unofficial rank structures of older serving constables, who expected new recruits to 'know their place'.

Once appointed to the force, there was a requirement to reside within the boundary of the borough. Section 15 of the force's general instructions specified "A constable must serve wherever he is ordered and his place of residence is subject to the approval of the Chief Officer of Police".⁷⁹ But the

⁷⁹ County Borough of South Shields Police General Instructions. Sec 15. (South Shields: South Shields County Borough Police Force, 1953).

qualities looked for in applicants: height; education; physical standard; age; were not identified in the general instructions. Some were the personal preference of the chief constable.⁸⁰ There was a lack of strict adherence to a defined standard; narrators provided many examples of 'exceptions to the rule' for example officers permitted to live outside the borough or appointed when clearly below the height limit. There were uniform national minimum ages and height restrictions set for all forces, however, it was for individual forces to determine the standards they would apply.⁸¹

It is difficult to establish who was recruited from a particular industry, such as mining or shipbuilding. The occupations recorded in the Appointments Book may show 'mechanic', but not that they were employed in a particular coal pit or shipyard. Therefore, previous occupations provided by recruits are listed by the 'genre' of occupation (see Table 6). Where a specific type of employment was provided, such as coal miner or caulker, it has been listed as mining or shipbuilding. This enables a general assessment to be made of the type of occupation the recruits held prior to appointment.

In the period 1918-1927, 34 per cent of recruits were previously employed as 'labourers'. However, by 1958-1968, the largest employment category was 'clerical work'. Of the sea-going recruits in this period, all were officers, either navigators or engineers; and those from the engineering trade were time served craftsmen. From 1958-1968, the proportion of appointments of police cadets, and transferees from other police forces, had increased. The former chief constable, Mr Humphrey, who did not appreciate transferees from other police forces, had retired in 1958.

⁸⁰ Weinberger, 1995, 24.

⁸¹ The minimum height standard in Police Regulations (4 and 5) 1952 was 5' 8" for a man and 5' 4" for a woman with ages of 19-30 for men and 20 -35 for women. Home Office, *Royal Commission on the Police 1960 Interim Report*, Cmnd. 1222. (HMSO: London, 1960), 116.

Table 6: Constables' previous occupation 1918-1968

Source: Appointments Book

Note: There was a significant decrease in the employment of labourers over the period and increases in those formerly employed in clerical work. The introduction of police cadets in 1951 had a positive impact on recruiting.

	1918-1927	1928-1937	1938-1947	1948-1957	1958-1968
Mining	17	0	4	1	4
Craftsman	15	13	10	21	15
Transport	12	2	4	8	5
Labouring	37	8	14	10	1
Military	2	4	6	10	5
Seagoing	1	3	0	4	11
Engineering	8	3	8	28	23
Shipbuilding	4	0	1	1	1
Sales/Clerical Work	9	18	23	42	66
Police /Cadet	0	3	2	6	25
Not Known	5	1	0	0	5
Total	110	55	72	131	151

By the 1960s, the police in South Shields were employing more civil servants, engineers and seagoing officers, all of whom would easily meet the educational standard. The increased use of technology, communications and legislation, required constables to be better educated. The police were therefore keen to ensure recruits held a good standard of education.⁸²

Overall, recruits in South Shields held previous occupations in keeping with the working community of the town. However whilst unemployment was high, the force did not appoint unemployed men. It is difficult to assess whether this was due to some form of stigma or because unemployed people did not apply. However, oral testimony indicates the poor economic situation in the town led many applicants to seek a position in the police since they believed that it offered a level of security not found elsewhere in the employment market.⁸³

⁸² Demise in educational standards was an issue raised in the Royal Commission in 1960.

⁸³ This issue is discussed further in the following chapter.

Chief Constables and police governance

Chief constables were members of the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) who met on a regular basis to discuss operational matters and provided a permanent link to the Home Office.⁸⁴ They were therefore aware of, and able to contribute to, the development of operational policing with other forces and inspired by the Home Office; a process further facilitated by the annual inspection of forces by His/Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary (HMIC). Police forces in the post-war period were therefore in regular contact with the centre (the Home Office), who by the mid-1960s, ensured they had a far greater role in the governance of the police.⁸⁵

The governance of county forces differed to that of the boroughs. Chief constables of county forces generally held greater autonomy and were in overall command of their force; although accountable to a standing committee of magistrates and councillors with whom he usually shared a similar social position, generally ensuring consensus on policing policy.⁸⁶ In the boroughs, the chief constables were under the control of watch committees, consisting of councillors and magistrates who formulated policing policy.⁸⁷ However, while chief constables in the counties often framed strategic direction it would be a mistake to conclude that chief constables in borough forces lacked power or influence. They managed the disposition of their force and were a deciding factor in the prosecution of offenders. Both county and borough chief constables had developed greater autonomy from the late nineteenth century.⁸⁸

⁸⁴ ACPO was founded in 1948 when previous chief constable associations for county and borough chief constables merged. Critchley, 195.

⁸⁵ Particularly with the instigation of a tripartite system of governance introduced by the Police Act 1964 which increased the power of the chief constables and Home Office at the expense of the police authorities.

⁸⁶ Although from the inter-war years chief constables of the counties were more likely to have originated from a police background than from a military or aristocratic background. Bryan Keith-Lucas. "The Independence of Chief Constables." Chap.3 in *Police and Policing in the Twentieth-Century*, edited by Chris A Williams, 43-57. Farnham: Ashgate, 2011, 51.

⁸⁷ Roger Greary. *Policing Industrial Disputes: 1893 to 1985*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985, 23.

⁸⁸ David G Barrie and Susan Broomhall. *A History of Police and Masculinities, 1700-2010*. (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012), 17; Reiner, 2010, 65.

The relationship between the borough chief constable and his watch committee depended on the personalities involved, and the dominance of power each allowed the other.⁸⁹ Diplomacy was a key asset of senior borough police officers, as members of watch committees particularly in small boroughs, were all associates of the same local elite - businessmen, councillors, aldermen and magistrates, usually well acquainted with each other.⁹⁰

The borough constable (including the chief constable) was an employee of his town; while the legal status of his office placed him as a servant of the crown.⁹¹ Nonetheless, for the period 1947-1964 the relationship he had with his employers (the watch committee) was one carrying an expectation of deference.⁹² Whilst the watch committee may have had overall responsibility for employing the constable, he took his orders and instructions from the chief constable, and his supervisory officers.

Two chief constables and an acting chief constable served South Shields from 1947-1968; all began their police careers in the town. Thomas Humphrey, a railway worker from Alnwick, Northumberland, joined in 1913. He served in the military police from 1917-1919. He was promoted chief constable in 1939, awarded the OBE in 1943 and the QPM in 1954. He retired in April 1958.⁹³ He is noted for leading the town's police throughout the Second World War.

Stanley Grey succeeded Humphrey. He was from Middlesbrough and joined the police in October 1925. Grey was a former clerk, and most of his service was performed at various ranks as a police clerk. He was promoted chief constable in 1958 and awarded the QPM in 1960. He retired on 30 September 1966. He was keen to generate forward thinking in the force and

⁸⁹ Keith-Lucas, 47.

⁹⁰ Edwards, 31. Alderman was a title awarded a councillor by peers.

⁹¹ Following a civil prosecution against Oldham Corporation (*Fisher v Oldham Corporation* 1930) for a case of unlawful arrest it was determined that constables performing duty acted as servants of the state, notwithstanding the corporation paid his wages and held power of dismissal. Neil Walker. *Policing in a Changing Constitutional Order*. (London: Sweet and Maxwell, 2000), 49-52.

⁹² This situation changed with the introduction of the Police Act 1964, which made it clear that the chief constable was in charge of all operational matters and the police authority assumed the mantle of ensuring effectiveness.

⁹³ The Order of the British Empire and Queens Police Medal.

created specialist roles such as juvenile liaison officer and early crime prevention officers.

South Shields Police Authority, aware of the pending amalgamation at the time of Grey's retirement, decided not to replace the chief constable but to allow the deputy, Thomas Barnes, to become acting chief constable.⁹⁴

Barnes, from Sunderland, was previously a paper maker. He joined the force in December 1937 and served as an officer in a tank regiment during the Second World War. The circumstances of pending amalgamation brought him rapid promotion from chief inspector in 1963 to acting chief constable on 1 October 1966. He retired on amalgamation with Durham Constabulary on 1 October 1968 and was awarded the QPM. Barnes had the difficult task of managing the implementation of amalgamation at the same time as overseeing the introduction of unit beat policing and personal radios.⁹⁵ He was noted as being the instigator of the 'police rock rescue team', that provided a service to those stranded on cliffs by incoming tides, and for being the first chief officer to receive leadership training.

Conclusion

From 1947-1968 the key traditional industries of South Shields experienced a slow but steady decline. The areas containing them, particularly the riverside, changed; its shops, pubs, houses were demolished initially creating an empty landscape. Many former occupants moved to new housing estates outside the area. Eventually the space they had vacated was rejuvenated with new roads, small factory units, and new housing. Different occupants, and some of the original inhabitants, formed the new populace of the redevelopment; a different community, living in different circumstances. Not only was the landscape remodelled, the community itself experienced a new mix, where some had moved out of the area and others moved in, all reacclimatising to a new environment. This was a process repeated on a smaller scale in other parts of the town. The period was marked as one of

⁹⁴ Mr Grey had asserted there were no suitable people for promotion within South Shields to be chief constable. It was the idea of the HMIC, Mr Scroggie, and the Home Office that Barnes take up the position in an acting capacity. South Shields Borough Watch Committee Minutes 25 May 1966.

⁹⁵ Other borough forces also appointed acting chief constables in a caretaker capacity for the periods between a chief constable resigning and amalgamation. For example, Wigan. Fairhurst, 79.

modernisation not only in the architecture of rebuilding but in the way society was developing, new ways of managing and policing urban areas were required in response to such changes.

Whilst there had been relatively good employment opportunities in the aftermath of the Second World War the unemployment rate was, except for a brief period in the mid-1950s, significantly higher than the national and regional rate. This created a sense of uncertainty in the labour market, a determining factor in ensuring sufficient recruits applied to join the police. However, it would also ensure that poverty was a constant concern in the town.

South Shields police in the post-war period recruited more staff locally. This was in stark contrast to earlier recruitment traditions where constables predominantly originated from rural areas outside of the town. Many of these 'external' officers still served throughout 1947-1968 and, being the custodians of traditional police practices, were influential in determining the unofficial 'style' of policing delivered. However, by the 1960s the majority of recruits were native to the town. Their former occupations suggest that they originated from the skilled working classes. Many were well educated having held previous occupations requiring good standards of numeracy and literacy. However, whilst the constables possessed greater connection to the town by their origin, and held artisan skills common to the area, they became less representative of the large section of semi-skilled, labouring working class compared to their colleagues recruited in the inter-war period. Half of police recruits from 1918-1927, for example, were miners and labourers. Generational differences in the police are therefore evident in terms of both origin and education.

The South Shields police force was small. Of the 128 county and borough police forces in 1947, only 40 were smaller by establishment.⁹⁶ Nonetheless, the development and establishment of the force was in keeping with other boroughs policing similar sized populations. The town was insular, and to

⁹⁶ HMICAR, 1947. This figure does not include private police forces or those separately regulated such as the River Tyne Police.

some extent isolated by the lack of major road networks. This meant the management of road congestion was less of an issue than in other towns and cities. However, by the mid-1960s greater access to motor vehicles provided people (including criminals) with more mobility.

The chief constables although promoted through the ranks in the town, were not native to it, although they still possessed good local knowledge and an understanding of the traditional 'easing' habits of the constable. The town's elite, traditionally saw the police force as 'their' police. The governing authority of the police, the watch committee, held the power of promotion and discipline until the instigation of the Police Act 1964. They were 'guided' in these processes by their chief constable who held true power in the force.

The detraditionalisation of the town in the post-war period saw the dispersal of former communities and the creation of new, the removal of a large number of poor housing and major redevelopment whilst incorporating a declining economy. However, energetic modernisation, new road and housing construction, provided a significant 'sense' of improvement and progressive energy. This changing environment was one in which the constable had to adapt and operate.

Chapter 4: Continuity and change in the recruitment process

Introduction

A preference for employing constables from outside the area to recruiting locally was identified as a change in the recruitment process in the previous chapter. This chapter examines other traditional methods used to assess applicants during the recruitment procedure and the extent to which continuity and change was evident within them during the post-war period. Issues in relation to what motivated people to become police officers; the number of vacancies; restrictions imposed on applicants; how applicants applied to the force; standards of educational and medical examination; and the interview process, will be analysed.

Generational differences marking a rejection of an older order were apparent both in wider social attitudes, depicted in chapter one, and in the origin and education of recruits in chapter three. For the purposes of this thesis, narrators are categorised into two groups. Group A, consisting of officers who joined from 1947-1957 and Group B, who joined from 1958-1968. This allows for comparisons between constables joining in a time of post-war austerity who were more likely to have experienced military service (Group A) and those who joined during a period of assumed greater affluence and change in society (Group B).

Candidates undertook a process of completing an initial application, an educational and medical examination, interview, and check of their character and antecedents. There has been little research in relation to these processes in the post-war period and oral historians have barely examined experiences of recruitment.¹

Reasons for joining

Narrators were asked why they wished to become police officers and their answers were categorised in a similar way to that used by Reiner in his

¹ Brogden, 1991, 10-20., provides an overview of recruitment in Liverpool in the inter-war years. Weinberger, 1995, comments on problems of recruiting nationally but not the recruiting experience.

occupational profile survey of police in the 1970s.² He identified that respondents offered both instrumental and non-instrumental reasons for joining the police. Instrumental reasons are those that have an extrinsic value associated with the job such as pay, housing, or security. Non-instrumental reasons are those that invoke an intrinsic aspect of the nature of the work itself, such as an interest in the type of work or an ability to assist society in some way.³ Many applicants in his survey desired a masculine occupation that offered an opportunity to work outdoors with the promise of variety. Policing was an attractive prospect to applicants who sought to work in a uniformed service with a good deal of camaraderie. Reiner defined this allure, as “involving an attraction to the idea of a uniformed, disciplined service with the comradeship and pride involved”. He labelled it ‘disciplined body syndrome’.⁴ Further, Reiner identified that 29 per cent of applicants had been encouraged or influenced by a relative or friend who were in the police.⁵

Of the narrators, one had a father who was associated with the police, another had a distant cousin who was a police officer, and two were brothers.⁶ There is no evidence of a strong family tradition of policing in those interviewed. However, one narrator became aware of vacancies in the police via a friend who knew a police officer and another was enticed by a companion who was a detective.⁷

In examining motives why individuals joined the police, consideration was given to their reasons, attitudes, and opinions, i.e. ‘the narrator’s subjectivity’.⁸ Those narrators joining in the immediate post-war years, Group A, were attracted primarily for instrumental reasons (82%), mainly for security of employment (see Table 7). They had experienced austerity, war and military service and were more inclined to accept their situation.

² Robert Reiner, *The Blue Coated Worker*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978).

³ Ibid, 159.

⁴ Ibid, 161.

⁵ Ibid, 162.

⁶ Narrators BA and TP. WT and GT are brothers.

⁷ Narrators BS and RB.

⁸ Allesandro Portelli. *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories*. (Albany: New York State University Press, 1991), 50.

Narrators often provided more than one reason to seek work as a constable and instrumental reasons were a consideration in both groups, but less evident in Group B (55%).

Table 7: Instrumental reasons given by male narrators for joining the police

Note: Special constable not included

Reasons for joining	Group A 1947-1957	Group B 1958-1968
Security	6	5
Housing	1	2
Pay	1	
Pension		1
Relocation	1	3
Responses provided	9 (82%)	11 (55%)
Number of narrators	11	20

Those demobbed following the Second World War were seeking stability and security. Narrators indicate the immediate post-war period offered employment uncertainty.

There was an old boy, he gave me advice at the time, he said, "You want to get in the police, because this government will kill the Tyne. It happened after the 14-18 war, there'll be no work for engineers, fitters and what have you". He said, "You get into the police or the customs." I thought, 'Well, I've been on the river; it might be a good idea to make my play there (River Tyne Police)'. I got in.⁹ (Group A).

I was demobbed, in December 1946. I joined the Sunderland Police Force. The reason I joined wasn't because I wanted to be a policeman. My first idea was to become a teacher and take up a government opportunity of a two-year course. But I was advised that teachers would be two-a-penny and there would be no work for teachers because there'd be more teachers than schools. That's why I joined the police.¹⁰ (Group A).

Narrators in Group A expressed concern that regular employment at the end of the war was not guaranteed and were mindful of the hardships their families endured in the recession of the 1930s.

An instrumental reason identified was that of relocation, where the applicant wished to have work situated in the town to be close to their spouse or family.

⁹ Interview FG.

¹⁰ 1st Interview NB.

Four of the 31 (13%) male narrators provided this reason.¹¹ Relocation was evident in the case of a sailor seeking to pay his way out of the Royal Navy at the end of the war. He needed employment to comply with naval regulations prior to release and wished to live close to his wife and her family.

Came home one day and my wife said, "My mother will give you the £25 to buy yourself out." So I made enquiries aboard ship. I had to have a job, I had no training, I'd only been a seaman. I'd been at sea all my life, since I was 14. I thought, 'Well, I'll try and be a policeman'. I had the height, so I made enquiries.¹² (Group A).

Relocation also emerged as a motive for narrators in Group B. An international centre for training merchant marine officers, the 'Marine and Technical College' was based in South Shields. Two students of the college married local women and later became police officers. Consequently, relocation was an issue when they desired to leave work at sea to settle with their families. One recalled:

I left sea and thought about getting a job ashore. I don't know why, but I left the house, got a bus down town, and it stopped in front of the police station. I walked in and said, "Have you any jobs?" I had no idea, she (wife) couldn't believe it when I said I'd gone back had an interview and got through. That was the start of me staying in Shields - I became part and parcel of South Shields borough.¹³ (Group B).

Changes in the post-war international status of Britain led to independence for former colonies, attracting some British citizens to return to the United Kingdom.¹⁴ Relocating to the United Kingdom was an issue for a police inspector with the Kenyan Police. He recognised the demise of the British Empire and the Africanisation of the former British colony as his reason for applying to the police in England.

The government was keen to give them independence. They wanted Kenya off their hands, and were actively encouraging it, and holding elections. They were Africanising departments, including the police force. I suddenly found the gentleman who I was reporting to, had been replaced by an African. A nice guy but he couldn't write...when he sent a memo out, it was with a thumbprint. I thought 'hang on a young guy at the beginning of my career?' I can't see this going anywhere, because when they get independence, it will probably go like the rest in Africa, just descend into a fiasco. I made up my mind that I was going to leave and go to the UK.¹⁵ (Group B).

¹¹ Special constables are not included in this calculation.

¹² 1st Interview DH.

¹³ 1st Interview LS.

¹⁴ It is impossible to assess how many constables in South Shields emigrated from the available data.

¹⁵ 1st Interview LP.

Relocation to gain police housing also emerged as an instrumental reason for joining the police.

We wanted to come to South Shields and join the police because housing in London was terrible; we couldn't get a house down there. It was impractical. We lived in rented accommodation and in the end, we thought I could join the police up here and get into South Shields.¹⁶ (Group B).

The main pulling power was guaranteed housing, they had flats in Keppel Street and you would get a house as soon as one became vacant.¹⁷ (Group B)

Others were seeking a mixture of security, status and a return to a uniformed, disciplined routine they had previously enjoyed in the armed forces (disciplined body syndrome).¹⁸

I went back to Stead and Simpson. Been there for a year and thought 'This is not a job for me'. In the army I used to be out and physical. People used to say to me, "Well, you're a big lad. Why don't you join the police?" I used to see these policemen in King Street. They were always tall and smart. I thought, 'Yeah, could be a job for me that'.¹⁹ (Group A)

Differences between the responses of the two groups indicate that the latter group (Group B) held higher expectations from society. Many had a grammar school education and were less tolerant of rigid petty discipline. While concerned with job security and pay they were more attracted to join the police for non-instrumental vocational reasons, such as a desire to assist society or for the status and image policing presented. While 73 per cent of narrators in Group A provided non-instrumental reasons to join the police, 'all' in Group B provided motivations in this category; indicative of a change in traditional views concerning the role a police career offered, from job to vocation (see Table 8).

The image portrayed of the police both by the media and in the public domain attracted some recruits. One narrator from Group B remembered the image he had of the police from being a regular viewer of the television drama series *Dixon of Dock Green*. His eventual appointment as a constable gives

¹⁶ 1st Interview PL.

¹⁷ Interview with CW, 1994.

¹⁸ Disciplined body syndrome is discussed on page 89.

¹⁹ 1st Interview FD.

support to the notion that the programme was a recruiting medium for the police.²⁰

I always wanted to join the police force. I had the bug of '*Dixon of Dock Green*' so much that I went into hospital to get my tonsils out and raised the roof because they weren't going to let me out on a Saturday. They let me out...amazing.²¹ (Group B).

Table 8: Non-Instrumental reasons given by male narrators for joining the police

Note: Special constable not included

Reasons for joining	Group A 1947-1957	Group B 1958-1968
Influenced by what they saw / experienced	3	4
Help Society		2
Always had a penchant for the job		6
Disciplined body syndrome	2	7
Status	3	1
Responses provided	8 (73%)	20 (100%)
Number of narrators	11	20

Similarities in groups A and B show that instrumental reasons, particularly employment security, were a common and continuing cause for men to join the police, (reinforcing Reiner's findings). However, constables who joined the police in the aftermath of the Second World War were far more concerned with securing permanent employment in what was an economically insecure environment.

Whilst constables from Group B were still concerned with job security, they expressed a clear desire to follow a career that provided disciplined body syndrome and an opportunity to serve the community. Relocation was not identified as a motive in Reiner's study.

The application

Of the 36 narrators, three (who became police cadets) became aware the force was seeking recruits via newspaper advertising. The remainder either wrote to the force, or simply attended the police station.

²⁰ Sydney-Smith cites police noted an increase in recruitment due to the television series *Dixon of Dock Green*. Susan Sydney-Smith, *Beyond Dixon of Dock Green Early British Police Series*, (London: IB Taurus, 2002), 108.

²¹ 1st Interview SB

There were no adverts in the paper I just took it into my head and wrote in. They sent an application form, then another letter, come to South Shields on a Saturday morning and have an exam. He gave us the exam papers and, I got my letter to start.²² (Group A).

When applicants attended the police station they could be invited to complete an application form there and then. One held the desirable criteria the police were looking for, education, ability to swim, and drive. He applied in 1960 and was required to take the entrance examination immediately.

After I'd finished early shift, I went down to the police station to get an application form to see about joining. I turned up at the desk and if you worked down the pit you had black around your eyes all the time, even after a good shower. I was just coming up to 20, saw the sergeant, and said I was interested in joining. He gave me a disdainful look. He said, "You'll have to fill an application form in." I said, "Right, I've been talking to Mr Winship at Harton Colliery and he recommended me." "Oh." Now I don't know if he'd had a word in the background, but he used to be the traffic inspector before he retired. It seemed to open the door. He said, "Well, fill the form in now". I said, "OK". "Education?" "Grammar school". "Any 'O' Levels?" "Yeah", told him I had a few. "Right, can you drive?" I said, "Yes, I passed my test, got my car licence, got motorbike as well". "All right, can you swim?" Because you were expected to swim and be a lifesaver, "Yes, got my bronze medallion, bronze bar". "Oh, there's an entrance exam". I think there was three parts in those days. He said, "You'd have to fill that in to see if you're up to it so far as education is concerned". I said, "No problem". He looked at his watch, he said, "Have you got time to do it now?" I said, "Yes".²³

The recruiting sergeant, and other non-operational staff, worked six days a week including Saturday morning.²⁴ Most recruits undertook the application process during the early evening or Saturday morning, some were required to take the educational examination and interview on the day they applied.

Becoming a constable in South Shields depended on the availability of vacancies and, if in the opinion of the chief constable, applicants were suited to the role. There are four ways in which vacancies are created in the police: dismissals; voluntary wastage; retirement (through sickness or completion of service); and increases in the establishment.²⁵

Much of the academic material published in the post-war period, research in various Home Office sponsored papers, and the Royal Commission on the Police of 1960, argued that wastage (which created vacancies) was a

²² 1st Interview GG.

²³ 1st Interview JB.

²⁴ The standard working week reduced from 48 to 44 hours in 1955; it further reduced to 42 hours in 1963. Judge, 127 and 192.

²⁵ Dismissals and reasons for voluntary wastage are discussed in the following chapter.

significant factor affecting the efficiency and effectiveness of the police.²⁶ As officers left, for a variety of reasons their positions were not filled. Official reports fail to emphasise the occupational culture of the police as a reason for wastage. However, they do identify poor man-management and police discipline as factors.²⁷ Statistically dismissals were low and official records hide levels of wastage from constructive dismissal or resignations offered as an alternative to dismissal, in other words those who 'jumped before they were pushed'.

When the South Shields Borough Police Force amalgamated into Durham Constabulary on 1 October 1968, the records attributable to the borough force were not maintained. This makes it difficult to assess the reasons why officers left the force after 1958. However, from available data, the rate of dismissal from 1958-1968 was at its highest since 1927. Narrators indicate true dismissal rates were even higher, as supervisors frequently used instruction 11 of the police general instructions to dismiss probationers.

A constable is on probation for two years. During this period, his services may be dispensed with at any time if the Chief Officer of Police considers that he is not fitted to perform the duties of his office.²⁸

Officers may have resigned rather than be 'required' to leave. The annual reports of the chief constable and minutes of watch committee meetings rarely provide reasons for resignations. However, constables were well aware of the use made by supervision of the clause that enabled them to remove unwanted probationers.

They had power. They had the power of which you couldn't attain. You were a probationary constable, and they could get you off the job. They could get you dismissed just by this system of reports that were submitted - 'In my opinion, this man will never make an efficient police constable'.²⁹

²⁶ The four Police Post-War Committee reports, published in 1946 and 1947, recognised the impact that freezing recruitment for the duration of the Second World War had on creating vacancies. Home Office, 1946-1947.

²⁷ Dismissal rates were 2.9% of all premature wastage in England and Wales between 1 January 1960 and 31 March 1966. The percentage of total wastage in small cities and boroughs of probationers was 32.7% in 1960 and 41.8% in 1965. Unsatisfactory man-management was identified as a cause in the summary of conclusions of the Home Office report. Home Office, *Police Manpower, Equipment and Efficiency* (London: HMSO, 1967), 50-55.

²⁸ County Borough of South Shields Police General Instructions.

²⁹ 1st Interview BA.

The power to dismiss via the route of bullying (or constructive dismissal) was also evident.

I was on eight till four; I had swapped shifts because this policewoman was going to her grandparent's golden wedding that night. A female prisoner came in drunk. I said, "Well, I'll stay on till two o'clock". The sergeant and inspector said, "No, she's going to have to come out". I says, "She's at her Grandmother's golden wedding". "That makes no difference". Of course, they went for her, to bring her down, and she raised the roof when she got in. She says, "I'm going to put my notice in" and she wrote her notice out and handed it in. It was before the superintendent the next morning, on the desk. She didn't have a chance to change her mind. I thought, 'if your face doesn't fit'.³⁰

Table 9: Reasons for men leaving the police 1918-1968

Note: Dismissed includes required to resign. Retired includes medical retirement or completion of service. Other includes transfers to other forces. Source: Appointments Book.

Period	Dismissed	Resigned	Retired	Killed on Duty	Died on Duty	Other	Unknown
1918-1927	17 (15.4%)	18 (16.3%)	63 (57.2%)	1 (0.9%)	7 (6.3%)	4 (3.6%)	
1928-1937	1 (1.8%)	20 (36.4%)	30 (54.5%)	0	3 (5.4%)	1 (1.8%)	
1938-1947	6 (8.3%)	33 (45.8%)	17 (23.6%)	1 (1.4%)	3 (4.1%)	12 (16.6%)	
1948-1957	6 (4.58%)	47 (35.87%)	21 (16.03%)	1 (0.76%)	6 (4.58%)	9 (6.87%)	41 (31.3%)
1958-1968	12 (7.9%)	43 (28.5%)	33 (21.8%)	0	0	5 (3.31%)	58 (38.4%)

Nationally vacancies were high although the three Home Office sponsored working parties reports, *Police Manpower, Equipment and Efficiency*, indicated "The deficiency in manpower is not spread evenly over the whole country, but is concentrated particularly in London. This accounts for over one-third of the deficiency".³¹ The report suggested that, by the application of a uniform minimum height requirement of five feet seven and a half inches, the pool of eligible recruits across the country would increase from 1.6 million to 1.8 million.³² It suggested that more applicants would apply with the acceptance

³⁰ Interview with MA.

³¹ Home Office, 1967, 8.

³² Ibid, 14.

of eyesight standards corrected by spectacles and the application of universal age limits.³³ It also recommended amendments to age restrictions allowing men who had served in the armed forces entry up to the age of 40.³⁴ Nonetheless, it knew that this move would do little to increase the potential number of people who would apply to join the police.³⁵

The Police Superintendents' Association expressed concern about the lowering of the height standard when giving evidence to the Royal Commission of 1960. They believed a tall man could provide a psychological advantage in conflict situations in which a shorter man would struggle.³⁶ In evidence, they stated:

We would be failing in our duty if we did not express our concern about the lowering of physical standards. Before the war, the accepted height standard for most forces was 5ft. 10in. – in fact, many insisted on 5ft. 11in. and 6ft. particularly the larger forces.³⁷

The vacancies carried by the police were a continued source of concern to the Home Office into the 1960s, and beyond. No serious study to determine the actual number of police officers required for the authorised establishment was performed, however the total authorised strength of the police in England and Wales on 31 December 1959 was 78,710, and the actual strength 73,353, a deficit of 6.8 per cent.³⁸ This at a time when crime was increasing, and changes to society presented the police with significant challenges. Annual HMIC reports recorded the deficit of the actual number of police officers against the authorised strength, considering it a matter affecting the efficiency of the police. By 1968 the deficit was over 15 per cent, more than double the 1959 figure.³⁹

³³ Ibid, 17.

³⁴ Ibid, 15.

³⁵ Age and height limits were removed in April 2003. In the interim a national standard height of 5' 8" for men was applied (a minimum age of 18 years is still in place). Mawby, Rob C, and Alan Wright. "The Police Organisation." Chap.10 in *Handbook of Policing*, edited by Tim Newburn, 224-252. Cullompton: Willan, 2008, 235.

³⁶ A man had to be at least 5ft. 8 ins. tall and aged 19-30 years to join the police (national minimum standards).

³⁷ Home Office, 1960, 197.

³⁸ Figures derived from tables published in the Appendix to the Minutes of Evidence pages 7 to 15 of the Interim Report of the Royal Commission of the Police, published in 1960.

³⁹ Figures from HMICAR, 1968, 18.

In 1967 South Shields police carried three vacancies, a deficit of 1.5 per cent.⁴⁰ From 1947-1968, the recorded percentage of vacancies in South Shields was less than national rates. It was a small force offering fewer vacancies and the economic situation in the town meant employment was a constant concern of the workforce; supporting instrumental reasons for police applications.

The Desborough Committee Report (1919), the Oaksey Committee Report (1948) and the Royal Commission of the Police (1960-1962) made continual references to poor pay and conditions being detrimental to recruiting and retaining constables.⁴¹ However, these issues were less of a worry to the management of South Shields police. In post-war annual reports up to 1948, the chief constable mentions poor recruitment briefly. As expected, the greatest number of vacancies carried in South Shields coincides with occasions when the authorised establishment increased; they were filled quickly.

Following the initial recommendations of the Royal Commission of 1960, the government awarded a police pay increase, identified as having a positive but short-lived impact on the number of applicants nationally.⁴² In South Shields the pay award made little difference to the volume of applications. From 1960-1962 there were fewer applications than in 1959. Further, as the authorised establishment grew (152 to 203) from 1957-1967 the percentage of vacancies decreased.⁴³ The worst ratio of applicants to vacancies was in 1965 when there were only 2.8 applicants for each vacancy. However, there had been an increase of establishment that year of 12 (see Table 10).⁴⁴ Whilst many applicants failed the entry criteria, recruitment, other than in the immediate post-war years, remained healthy.

⁴⁰ SSCAR, 1967.

⁴¹ The amount of vacancies and the actual strength of a police force was a long held measure of the effectiveness of the police by HMIC and consequently reported upon in their annual reports. If a force was significantly below strength, the Inspector could recommend the exchequer grant be refused. Forces were therefore well aware of their strength and the vacancies they carried.

⁴² Weinberger, 1995, 24.

⁴³ Percentage of vacancies measured against the authorised establishment figures derived from HMICARs and SSCARs.

⁴⁴ In 1964 forces were required to reassess establishments using a realistic formula as a result most forces experienced an increase the following year. JP Martin and Gail Wilson. *The Police: A Study in Manpower*. (London: Heinemann, 1969), 90.

The amount of applications received and processed during 1949-1967 reveal a greater ratio of men applying for each vacancy up to 1958 than for the years following (7.6 compared to 5.9).⁴⁵

Table 10: Male applicants 1947-1967 showing ratio of applicants to appointments

Note: Details of applicants were not recorded until 1949. Vacancies include officers seconded outside of the force.

There is no data for 1968. Sources: HMICARs; SSCCARs 1947-1967

Group A	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956	1957
Applications			113	97	76	77	51	31	55	62	58
Appointments	27	25	17	15	8	15	4	5	7	10	7
Authorised Strength	149	149	154	156	156	156	156	156	156	156	166
Vacancies	31 20.8%	14 9.4%	11 7.1%	6 3.8%	9 5.7%	7 4.5%	10 6.4%	9 5.8%	7 4.5%	1 0.6%	12 7.2%
Ratio:			6.6	6.4	9.5	5.1	12.7	6.2	7.8	6.2	8.2
Group B	1958	1959	1960	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968
Applications	106	86	57	46	74	94	66	62	36	47	N/A
Appointments	9	10	8	11	13	22	12	22	9	9	N/A
Authorised Strength	166	166	166	166	166	187	189	201	203	203	N/A
Vacancies	9 5.4%	11 6.6%	8 4.8%	9 5.4%	1 0.6%	7 3.7%	9 4.8%	7 3.5%	10 4.9%	3 1.5%	N/A
Ratio:	11.8	8.6	7.1	4.2	5.7	4.3	5.5	2.8	4	5.2	N/A

Restrictions on applicants

Applicants were required to comply with age and height limits and be of good character. When police forces struggled to fill vacancies, they had an option to ease these entry conditions, by increasing the accepted age range, reducing the height requirement, or both. South Shields police maintained one of the most demanding height requirements of all forces in Scotland, England and Wales. In 1961 it was 5ft 10 ½ in.⁴⁶ Only Motherwell and

⁴⁵ Data from SSCCARs 1947-1967.

⁴⁶ Home Office, *Your Career, Life in the Police*. (London: HMSO, 1961), 26.

Wishaw Police, Ayr Police (both Scottish and 5 ft. 10 ½ in.), Nottingham City (6 ft.) and City of London (5ft. 11in.) had a height restriction the same or greater than South Shields. The remaining 158 forces had restrictions under five feet ten and a half inches.

The physical side was really the main thing; you had to be five foot ten and a half. You had to have a certain chest measurement. They used to measure your chest inflated, and deflated, and it all had to be within 'their' bounds.⁴⁷ (Group B)

South Shields placed a more restrictive age requirement of 19-26 years on applicants. Only five other forces had similar age limits and 119 forces (73%) offered a wider age limit usually 19-30 years. Some 38 police forces (22%) had a more restricted age range; usually only one year less than that of South Shields.⁴⁸ If these restrictions had been 'strictly' applied, in South Shields, they would have limited the amount of viable applicants. The available pool of candidates it could recruit from was still less than that subscribed by the majority of forces nationally and locally.⁴⁹ Yet it was still able to recruit 'suitable' applicants.

There were constant pressures from HMIC and the Home Office for a uniform approach in setting standards for recruitment. It is difficult to see how the smaller height restrictions imposed in industrial cities such as Liverpool and Manchester in 1961 (both 5ft. 8in.), would result in a reduced quality of policing in those areas when compared to South Shields with its higher height standard. It is apparent from oral testimony that in 1964 South Shields reduced its height limit by half an inch.⁵⁰ This is possibly due to pressure from the Home Office suggesting "There is a great deal of support for the view that height restrictions above 5 ft. 8 in. are no longer reasonable".⁵¹

There were exceptions for constables in South Shields not to conform to height standards imposed, for example, when constables transferred in from elsewhere. However, from 1965-1968 two men were recruited below five

⁴⁷ 1st Interview, GT.

⁴⁸ All data for height and age restrictions obtained from Home Office, 1961, 23-26.

⁴⁹ The heights of the neighbouring forces were: River Tyne Police 5' 9"; Durham County 5' 8"; Sunderland Borough 5' 10"; Gateshead Borough 5' 10".

⁵⁰ HMICAR, 1965 confirms there was one force with a height requirement of 5' 11" and 46 forces with a height standard of 5' 10" remaining forces had lower limits.

⁵¹ HMICAR, 1965.

foot ten inches, neither of whom were transferees (both were 5' 9 ½").⁵²

There was latitude available to the recruitment sergeant in respect of height for appropriate candidates, particularly when 'suitable' applicants applied, or when there had been an increase in the force establishment. Other than when applicants failed the medical examination, the recruiting sergeant generally held a deciding role.

A conclusion gained from oral testimony as to why height standards were retained was that of 'tradition and image'. The status held by the police in the town, and the image it displayed to the public was cherished by the narrators, it set them apart from other forces.

I was lucky because the borough was expanding, by about ten. It was a very tall police service. You had to be five-foot ten. I wasn't. I was just under, but the officer saw that I had a number of O'Levels, so he bashed it up, and I became five-foot ten.⁵³ (Group B).

The force required constables to have an air of authority created by their physical presence. This was to enhance status in the community and ensure the physical ability to deal with violence; a recruiting policy traditionally continued from the early twentieth century.⁵⁴ Image was important in the recruiting process; some men (and women) being rejected because of their 'unsuitable' appearance.

Other local borough forces, particularly Sunderland and Gateshead, had little difficulty in recruiting. One narrator successfully applied to his local force (Gateshead) and placed on a waiting list. However, in order to accelerate appointment he also applied to St Helens in Lancashire, South Shields, and Sunderland.

Initially I applied to Gateshead. I passed the exam, was put on a waiting list. Three, four, five months go by; I'm still on the waiting list. I thought, 'That's no good'. I went to the local labour exchange and asked which police forces had vacancies. One of them was St Helens, in Lancashire. I thought, 'the sooner I get in the better, I'm getting married maybe we can move down there'. I went down, did the exam, had the medical, interviewed by the chief constable. He said, "I'm prepared to accept you but you're getting married shortly and your wife doesn't know the area and I want you to be sure before you come. Bring your wife down and I'll put the car on with my driver and he'll take you around St Helens, and show you the town". My wife and I went down we were taken round by the chief constable's driver, shown the

⁵² Appointments Book.

⁵³ 1st Interview SB

⁵⁴ Shpaya-Markov, 2002, 36-37.

town and told to go home and think about it. I thought about it, and you know, take my wife away from her family...I don't think she's that keen. So, I applied to South Shields and Sunderland at the same time. I got the interview with South Shields on the Saturday, interview at Sunderland on the Wednesday, exam at South Shields on the Saturday, exam at Sunderland on the Wednesday. South Shields were a little bit ahead of Sunderland and I was appointed.

What was the difference between the exams at these places?

They were the same basic, maths, spelling...spelling was a big thing to the police. If you couldn't spell, you wouldn't get in because you had to write reports, general knowledge that was the three subjects.

Which of the forces interviewed you?

St Helens and South Shields.

Was there any difference in the nature of the questions you were asked?

All pretty much the same. I'm going back a lot of years but they were talking to me about my family, why I wanted to join the police force. Basic, sensible interviews, no trick questions, genuinely wanted to find out about you. Wanted to find out what sort of person you were. I think you were appointed on, sort of gut feeling of people, you know.⁵⁵

A successful applicant in South Shields was usually appointed immediately and given work at the police station, pending a start date at a district police training centre. This removed the need to maintain a waiting list of successful applicants and ensured current vacancies were filled.

Even though there was a need for more applicants nationally, there was little obvious change in the height and age restrictions set for recruitment. There was a continuity of varying standards across forces. However, it is apparent that standards in South Shields were flexible and a lessening of the strict height standard was evident by the late 1960s.

The education examination

The Police Post-War Committee in its second report published in 1947 recommended that there should be a standard minimum educational test for a candidate before acceptance into a force.⁵⁶ They considered the educational test should not be too severe "since academic qualifications are not of themselves a sound criterion of a man's capabilities as a police officer".⁵⁷ Even so, the *First Report of the Police Post-War Committee* (1946)

⁵⁵ Interview BO.

⁵⁶ Home Office, *Second Report of the Police Post-War Committee*, 1947, 33.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

was concerned with the higher training and development of an officer.⁵⁸ Its consideration of the educational abilities of applicants were intended for a constable who it envisaged during the day would “keep order, check offences, control traffic and deal with miscellaneous enquiries from the public”, and during the night “deter would-be thieves and examine shops and premises to see that they are secure”.⁵⁹ This perspective instilled the idea that few skills were required to perform patrol. However, as the country became more technically advanced and consumer-driven the tactics of policing were to change; the educational attainment and skill of the constable needed to progress in tandem. In the 1960s, constables required proficiencies to use Telex machines; speed radar meters; radio burglar alarms; and radio communications. The ability to drive would also become desirable. Technology became a key aspect of policing to address the increasing demands of a more sophisticated society.⁶⁰ Therefore, more stringent educational standards were required.

The Royal Commission of 1960 also considered the level of educational attainment required of a constable. The Police Federation gave evidence of deterioration in the standard of education, they quoted from a recruiting handbook “If you can spell, write legibly, and do simple arithmetic you have nothing to worry about”.⁶¹ There was ample evidence provided to the commission to show that, in the majority of forces, the educational qualification for entrants had deteriorated to a low level. The Police Federation described how an applicant could “descend the ladder of educational attainment, until he reaches a force which, by its severe manpower shortage, places little or no importance on his education”.⁶²

In 1961, a recruiting pamphlet issued by the Home Office *Your Career, Life in the Police*, placed more value on abilities of being a photographer, mechanic, or a radio operator than on education.⁶³ The pamphlet sought to answer

⁵⁸ Home Office, 1946, terms of reference 2.

⁵⁹ Home Office, *Second Report of the Police Post-War Committee*, 1947, 4.

⁶⁰ Manwarring-White, 17.

⁶¹ Home Office, 1960, 117.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Home Office, 1961.

potential questions asked by applicants. To the question “What about education?” it responds “If you reached the normal school leaving standard you have nothing to worry about”.⁶⁴

School students in the early 1960s attained a higher standard of education and improved grades of GCEs (General Certificate of Education, referred to as O’ Levels) however, there was concern that better qualified men were not attracted to join the police.⁶⁵ This was an anxiety echoed by HMIC who urged more appointments from “graduates and sixth formers”.⁶⁶ In South Shields, it appears that one method of ensuring the constable had a good standard of education was by recruiting from occupations where educational attainment was a necessity, such as civil servants, engineers or other skilled artisans. Whether this was a deliberate policy of the recruiting staff, or a by-product from the results of the police entrance examination cannot be ascertained.⁶⁷

There were varying methods used nationally to assess the educational competence of the applicant who had to:

Satisfy the chief officer of police that he is sufficiently educated by passing a written or oral examination in reading, writing and simple arithmetic, or an examination of a higher standard, as may be prescribed by the chief officer of police.⁶⁸

The Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police when giving evidence to the Royal Commission submitted copies of educational examinations used.⁶⁹ These show that in 1930 they consisted of long multiplication, division, and subtraction tests, a dictation test of 200 words, and a requirement to read a passage from a book. By 1959, the examination consisted of an English composition paper (¾ hour), an arithmetic paper (½ hour) and a general knowledge paper, which lasted 15 minutes. Similar educational tests were used in South Shields.

⁶⁴ Home Office, 1961, 4.

⁶⁵ Martin and Wilson, 86.

⁶⁶ HMICAR, 1965.

⁶⁷ See profile of police recruits, chapter three.

⁶⁸ Regulation Five, Police Regulations, 1919.

⁶⁹ Home Office, 1960, 334f.

A police entrance examination in South Shields, in the immediate post-war period, required the candidate to stand and answer general knowledge questions and read a passage from a book. One applicant initially failed a reading test because of his strong Kentish accent.

The sergeant said, "Will you take a test?" I said, "Yeah". So I sat the English, arithmetic and medical tests and he said, "I'll see you next time you come on leave". So, a month later when I'm on leave I went down, I said, "I've come to get the results of my tests". He said, "You know what, you failed". I said, "How on earth could I fail?" "You failed at the English". I said, "My English is alright". He says, "We couldn't understand you, you were talking so broad south country and you talk quick. Whatever you read to me I couldn't pick you out, so I had to fail you. Do you want to try again?" I said, "Yes please". "Talk slower, you can't help your accent, but talk slower". So - got a book out and read it again, from Moriarty, a book on police. "You were alright; we'll sign you up for the police force".⁷⁰ (Group A)

In the 1940s and 1950s the entrance examination did not present a significant hurdle. The format in the immediate post-war years concentrated on oral efficiency, reading and general knowledge.

They took me into one of the courtrooms, I had an intelligence test and he asked many questions from a sheet he was holding, then immediately afterwards I was taken to another part of the police station where they measured me. I just made the height. The height limit for South Shields borough was five feet ten and a half. They were quite tight about it, but I just made it.⁷¹ (Group A)

There was some latitude shown by the examiner during the entrance examinations. A hint was often provided by the examiner to ease candidates through the process. This constable joined in 1966.⁷²

There were four papers maths, English, I believe general knowledge and the last one was dictation. I'd been there about an hour and a half and he told me I'd passed the first three papers and the last paper I had was dictation. He told me I was allowed seven spelling mistakes. If I had over seven, I was refused entry. He started dictating certain paragraphs to me and after about five minutes he came around behind me and pointed to a word I'd just written. He said, "Do you not think the 'i' should be before the 'e' in that word there?" I didn't know if it was right or not, I'd never heard of this word before never mind spell it. So, I realised he was giving me a helping hand, I thanked him very much. He went back round the other side of the table and kept on dictating and then after another five minutes, he came around the back of me again and said something very similar and I thanked him again. I finished the dictation and he said, "Congratulations you've got seven mistakes, you're in the force"⁷³ (Group B)

⁷⁰ 1st Interview DH.

⁷¹ 1st Interview TKW.

⁷² There were similar recollections by others in respect of general knowledge and mathematics.

⁷³ 1st Interview TR.

Importantly by 1965, applicants who had five or more GCE O'levels, including Maths and English, were exempt from educational entrance examinations.⁷⁴

The medical examination

An applicant from Middlesex, who applied to both Sunderland and South Shields Borough Police forces, on arriving at the area he was taken to police stations and police surgeons' houses for the educational and medical examinations. The standard required of one force was not the same as the other:

The doctor was having his Sunday lunch with visitors, and I had the exam. He had a shag pile carpet. It must have been two inches deep; it was the in-thing then, shag pile. My feet were barely visible in the pile. He took one look and said, "You've got flat feet". I had a friend who was a foot specialist, a specialist consultant, he wrote letters and all sorts but the chief, he wouldn't budge. He said, "That's why I employ a doctor, if he says you've got flat feet, you've got flat feet". That was Stanley Grey. I applied to Sunderland and the doctor there didn't find flat feet.⁷⁵ (Group B)

The medical examination at South Shields could be an exacting or simple process, depending on the doctor who performed the examination. There was always an emphasis in the examinations on the health and condition of the feet due to the amount of foot patrols a constable would perform. The following illustrates how examinations could be stringent involving the assessment of a cardiologist to gauge a candidate's fitness for entry to Sunderland police.

I applied to join Sunderland Borough, I didn't want to go into South Shields at that time, I grew up there, I knew a lot of lads there, and thought if I worked in Sunderland, I would be away from them. I got rejected at the very last minute - I had a heart murmur.

I later went to South Shields and applied they said, "Well let's see what a specialist says about your heart murmur". He came back and said, "You're perfectly OK, there is a slight murmur there. You've probably had that for a number of years". There was nothing wrong and I went through the medical at South Shields and passed.⁷⁶ (Group B)

The robustness of the medical examination in the immediate post-war era was less stringent than in later years. Men demobbed from the armed forces were medically graded prior to discharge and the police surgeon accepted this assessment (if fit) as the standard required of a constable. However, the

⁷⁴ Interviews with SB and CA.

⁷⁵ 1st Interview PL.

⁷⁶ 1st Interview ER.

force would not accept applications from men engaged in National Service, until they had completed it.⁷⁷

I think he just used to look in your ears and look up your nose and sound your chest. They weren't stringent, not the type of examination you would get today. There was no sounding your heart and things like that, not that I was aware of anyway.⁷⁸ (Group A)

It was just a matter of eyesight, previous history and breathing, chest, ears and that was it. There was no x-ray involved.⁷⁹ (Group A)

The thoroughness of the medical examination fluctuated in the 1960s:

I had flat feet. Maybe not as flat as some, and I remember going to a police surgeon at that time. He said, "We've got one problem with you, you've got flat feet, if I report it, you're not going to get in". Then he said, "I think I'll just forget that you've got flat feet, and hope everything else is all right". Everything else was all right.⁸⁰ (Group B)

If you could walk in I think you were alright. It wasn't anything horrendous.⁸¹ (Group B)

He examined your feet in minute detail, to make sure you didn't have fallen arches or anything like that. It was not to modern standards, but it was quite stringent they made sure you were quite fit and able to walk around anyway.⁸² (Group B)

I told him I played rugby, "Oh, you play rugby, you'll be alright then, you'll be fit as a lop", signed the form and goodbye. That was it, medical.⁸³ (Group B)

It is difficult to assess the actual quality of the medical standards set by individual forces or the quality of the medical examinations. However, there was no standardised approach taken to assess the fitness of police recruits across borough police forces; a subjective approach was often applied. The standard of examination varied with police surgeons but the criteria generally became more rigorous in the late 1960s. Nonetheless, of the 674 applicants who applied to join the force after 1958 only 24 (4%) failed the medical process.⁸⁴

Interview and rejections

The medical, educational, and physical tests were complete prior to interview with the chief constable. He asked applicants why they wished to join the

⁷⁷ National Service ended in 1960.

⁷⁸ 1st Interview FD.

⁷⁹ 1st Interview GG.

⁸⁰ 1st Interview AD.

⁸¹ Interview KR.

⁸² 1st Interview GT.

⁸³ 1st Interview SB.

⁸⁴ SSCARs, 1950-1967.

police, usually with a cautionary statement about poor pay and difficult working conditions. It was common for the candidate to be required to walk back and forth in front of the chief constable to assess their deportment; the image the recruit would give in the public domain. A narrator recalled having to present himself in this manner during his interview in 1954.

I had to go and see the chief constable and I was made to walk up and down and to show you were very smart, walking up and down and all the rest of it.⁸⁵ (Group A)

Successive chief constables who carried out the interviews were keen to assess the image that officers would portray as patrolling constables. Stanley Grey, the successor to Mr Humphries, also ensured that the deportment of a candidate was considered during interview, continuing a tradition set by his predecessors.

Went in to see the chief constable. I was dressed in a three-piece immaculate suit, Cuban heels. Stan Grey says, "Walk across the room, I want to see your deportment", how I walked, you know.⁸⁶ (Group B)

Some applicants were rejected at interview, usually for their appearance, however this was rare. Others were rejected because there were no vacancies; the force did not maintain a waiting list. A review of reasons for rejection show that had the force relaxed its height and age restrictions, they could have increased the pool of eligible applicants by at least 173, had they met the minimum national standards (see Table 11).⁸⁷ Before 1958, recorded data for height and medical rejection were combined, making it impossible to differentiate those rejected because of height or health. The chief constable was able to set the standard of educational test, height and age restrictions. Had the force considered recruitment was a significant problem they had the option to adjust those standards; on occasions, they did.

⁸⁵ 1st Interview AJ.

⁸⁶ 1st Interview TP.

⁸⁷ The SSCARs did not include data on applications and rejections until 1950. Establishment figures prior to 1950 obtained from HMICARs.

Table 11: Reasons for rejecting applicants 1950-1967

Source: SSCCARs 1950-1967

Reason for Rejection	Men	Women	Total
Education	313	15	328
Height (post 1958)	99	8	107
Medical (post 1958)	23	1	24
Physical or height standard (pre 1958)	196		196
False particulars provided	2		2
Failed to complete process	194	20	214
No vacancies	3	43	46
Appearance	4	3	7
Had not completed National Service	39		39
No reason provided	46	36	82
Outside age limits	62	4	66
Total	981	130	1111

Character checks

Applicants successful at interview, were subject to checks on their character; their wives; family members; and home address.⁸⁸ Applicants were unaware of the result of such checks as they would simply be accepted or rejected.

There were conditions that would bar applicants from becoming a constable apart from obvious issues such as criminal convictions. The conditions of appointment were clear.

No person shall be eligible for appointment if without the consent of the chief officer of police: he has any business or holds any other office or employment; resides at premises where his wife or member of his family keeps a shop or any like business; holds, or his wife, or any, member of his family holds any license granted in pursuance of liquor licensing laws or laws regulating places of public entertainment; or is a member of any trade union.⁸⁹

A sergeant made home visits to the applicants, and to those who provided references, to investigate if the regulations would negate an application. The sergeant performed a criminal records check and a subjective appraisal of

⁸⁸ This was to check the officer lived in a 'suitable location'. Successful candidates had to live where the chief constable approved, County Borough of South Shields, *Police General Instructions*, (South Shields: South Shields Police, 1953), conditions of entry.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

the home environment. However, such visits could turn into a social occasion.

The sergeant came to my house for a preliminary interview. It was a very cold winter's night. He introduced himself to my mam and dad, and sat down. I remember he was wringing his hands in front of the fire trying to keep warm, there was no central heating in those days just a coal fire. My mam looked at him, and says, "Would you like a drink Sergeant?" He says, "That's very nice of you". "It's a very cold evening would you like a whisky?" "For medicinal purposes, that's very nice," he says. My mam give him a whisky. He had a whisky and a bit talk, "Would you like another drink Sergeant?" "That's very nice; the first one's beginning to work". He had another whisky and we chatted about why I wanted to join the police force and life in general, and then he went away quite happy, glowing he was, glowing.⁹⁰ (Group B)

Those applicants who had successfully negotiated the processes of application were offered employment with the force as a constable.

Conclusions

Image was an important facet of the South Shields Borough police. It was kindled in the appearance of its constables who conformed to a taller height standard than the majority of other forces. The force attempted to retain this standard however it regularly allowed laxity, and in the later 1960s reduced the standard slightly, allowing men to be appointed under their established height limit (but still well over the national minimum standard). This was due to pressure from the Home Office; and to enable the force to maintain its own recruiting targets.

This seemingly petty tradition marks the independent nature of a borough force that saw the reduction of height limits as a reduction in standards. All entrants had to be a minimum height providing continuity and a nonchalant, yet proud, acceptance that the force was tall. Their height formed a sense of solidarity; they were taller, different, marked as special, when compared with others. Yet, by the mid-1960s, this was, to some extent, a façade as evidence of subjective selection by recruiting sergeants became more apparent.

Generational differences for incentives to join the police show there was a perception, particularly by those that joined in Group A, that employment

⁹⁰ 1st Interview TR.

security was acquired when joining the police, although it transcended to a lesser extent into Group B. Changes in society, an improved economy and the influence of the media led to more narrators in Group B perceiving that a police career offered opportunities to assist and improve society, whilst providing work in a disciplined, uniformed, outdoor environment. These findings are similar to those found by Reiner in his work of the 1970s although, a significant minority of narrators did indicate relocation and housing motivated them to join the police.

The medical standards were never particularly stringent, often subjective and dependent on the doctor carrying out the examination. Applicants examined in the immediate post-war period (when vacancies were high) were subject to scant scrutiny, particularly if discharged as fit from the military. Police surgeons accepted similar assessments of candidates' medical fitness when they had completed their National Service. There was no uniform standard of medical examination applied to all forces. However, whilst initially basic they became more thorough, with greater use of specialist practitioners (in keeping with higher standards in society) in the 1960s. The amount of apparent subjectivity and the casual approach by doctors, recalled by the narrators, has to be treated with some caution. Applicants were young men, most were active in sport and some held physically active jobs, the doctors may simply have been reacting to what they saw, recognising apparent fitness.

Subjectivity was also evident during the educational examination process. By the end of the period, educational standards had increased in society and many applicants became exempt from the police entrance examination due to the level of qualifications they held. The more stringent standards were in keeping with changes to the traditional role of the constable who required more complex skills to deliver a police service. There was no standardised or uniform system of assessing police recruits - individual forces set differing standards. The criterion for appointment in South Shields Borough police was more stringent than for other national or regional police forces who had less rigorous height standards. Police recruiting in the North East did not present a significant problem and some were able to maintain a waiting list of

successful applicants. Nonetheless, most of the assessment methods throughout the two decades after the war showed little change.

By 1966 it had become clear that South Shields, Sunderland and Gateshead police forces would amalgamate into their larger neighbouring police force that held less strict height and age standards. Amalgamation provided a standardised approach to recruitment procedures with Durham's less restrictive standards becoming the norm and recruiting processes and policies were administered at Durham Constabulary Headquarters for the whole of the county.

Chapter 5: From civilian to constable

Successful applicants entered the working domain of the police service and on becoming constables were subjected to the culture, institution, and 'codes of conduct', of the police; both the official codes, as written in discipline regulations and conditions of service and unofficial codes, a similar socialisation process to joining the armed forces. This culture included "mutual support to deny wrongdoing and to confront complaints."¹ They experienced how the police operated from an internal perspective, one not available to the wider public and of which they were unaware.² They would find their status in society changed, and experience a variety of responses to their new position from both family and friends.³

This chapter contributes to an understanding of the experience of recruits when confronted with an occupational culture very different to any previous encounters, in a period when detraditionalisation within society was evident. It will plot the main factors that moulded that experience: the reaction from friends and relatives; formal and informal police training; performing patrol; the drink culture; and discipline. It will assess how these combined features affected the level of wastage of probationers. Importantly it seeks to identify how narrators viewed the culture in which they worked, the role they played in it as well as continuity and change (elements and indicators of detraditionalisation) in these practises.

The reception of former friends and family to the new police recruit

There have been debates surrounding the decline of the traditional status of the police officer and the deferential status they held in society, however there has been little research of the experience recruits had when transforming from their former lives as civilians in the period 1947-1968. The level of public respect towards the police diminished in the 1950s and 1960s; this was a period of declining support for a variety of long-established

¹ Clapston and Emsley, 2011, 310.

² Although some recruits had relatives who were police officers.

³ Reiner identified that police officers felt ostracised by the public in out-of-work-life. Reiner, 1978, 178.

institutions.⁴ The early part of these decades were “marked not merely by affluence but by deference and conformity”, where police officers were accepted not so much as individuals, but as “holders of a socially authoritative office”.⁵ Models of social deference were subject to profound upheaval in late twentieth-century Britain that witnessed a rise in desubordination and a “reconfiguration of relations between identity and authority, known in social theory as detraditionalisation”.⁶

The actions of the police during the Second World War, when operating closely to, and having joint experiences with the working classes (their natural adversaries), cemented a new found respect.⁷ By the early 1950s the police had obtained “status, as totems of national pride”.⁸ It was not until the late 1950s and 1960s that British society felt “all was not well in relations between police and people”.⁹ This decline of the traditional view of the police led to an erosion of their “Dixon image”.¹⁰ The police prestige, of possessing benevolent guardianship, was marred by cases of police corruption and misconduct in the 1950s and 1960s.¹¹ The final report of the Royal Commission on the Police, criticised for its failure to address police public relations or police accountability, recognised difficulties in establishing the measure of police public relationships.¹² It reported that:

There was an acute conflict of evidence whether or not the present relationship between the police and the public is better or worse than in the past.¹³

A social survey, carried out by the Central Office of Information, concluded “It is clear such change as there has been in public opinion has been mainly in

⁴ Rosen, 33-35.

⁵ Loader and Mulcahy, 13.

⁶ Ibid, 14. However, detraditionalisation has a wider remit, as outlined in chapter one.

⁷ Ingleton, 361.

⁸ Reiner, Robert. “Policing a Postmodern Society.” *The Modern Law Review* 55, no. 6 (Nov 1992b): 761 - 781, 761.

⁹ Clive Emsley. “The English Bobby: An Indulgent Tradition.” Chap. 5 in *Myths of the English*, edited by Roy Porter, 114-135. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992, 128.

¹⁰ Ibid, 763.

¹¹ The issues leading up to the Royal Commission on the Police 1960 which outline these cases of public concern are outlined in Chapter one.

¹² Jennifer Hart, “Some Reflections on the Report of the Royal Commission on the Police” *Public Law*, (1963), 283-304. Provides an analysis of issues leading to the commission being established.

¹³ Home Office, 1962, para 331, 101.

favour of the police”.¹⁴ Nonetheless, critics of the Royal Commission pointed out that the interpretation of the survey failed to recognise negative connotations contained within its findings.¹⁵ What was established is the zenith of deferential status held towards the police had passed and was in decline.

The narrators realised on becoming a constable their relationship with the public, friends, and relatives revealed itself in a distinct way. They attested that the public saw the uniform, rather than the person wearing it. They viewed relationships with the public as one of necessity, described by one narrator as “Hospitals are like the police. No one really likes them, but when you need them, you're pleased they are there.”¹⁶

In the police force, you have hundreds of associates but few friends. People were friendly with you for whom you were and for what they might gain.¹⁷ (Group A)

The tensions created by the nature of police duties, and the suspicion held between police and public, led constables to socialise within their own circle.¹⁸ When in police housing they were grouped together, either in flats at police headquarters or in houses provided by the local authority, strengthening bonds of solidarity.

The majority of constables' families were proud that they had joined the police.¹⁹ One, who joined in 1947, recalled his father recognised the authority and fear the public held of constables.

My father was proud to think that his son was a policeman. Because policemen then, you crossed the road to avoid them, people on the same side as the policeman crossed the road and walked on the other side.²⁰ (Group A)

Not all families had the same viewpoint. The complex and changing attitudes of society were reflected in individual experiences. A constable who joined in 1956 recalled his mother's opinion:

¹⁴ Ibid, para 338, 103.

¹⁵ Philip Rawlings, *Crime and Power: A History of Criminal Justice 1688-1998* (Harlow: Pearson Education, 1999), 158.

¹⁶ JB, comment to author, 7 June 2010.

¹⁷ David Hoskins. “Personal Memoirs.” Unpublished work, 1990, 7.

¹⁸ Reiner describes the tension as a combination of ‘solidarity and isolation’, Reiner, 2010, 122.

¹⁹ The question was asked of the narrator not family members.

²⁰ 1st Interview DH.

She wasn't very police orientated, didn't like the police, and she thought it a bad thing I joined. She always thought that right until the day she died. She didn't like it, but it was a job and that was it.²¹ (Group A)

All the narrators had working class origins and indicated their families generally respected the police. They were proud of holding an office that brought respect from a community who held them in some 'fear'.

Relationships with friends were affected by constraints imposed on leisure time by working unsocial hours and shift work, particularly at weekends. A divide fell between constables and former acquaintances. Former friends recognised that their companion was now a constable, on or off duty. This meant he may not be trusted:

It did change. Good friends remained good friends others looked at you in a completely different way. Whereas before, they would be very open and would swear. When I was around, they wouldn't swear. They thought it was wrong, swearing in front of a policeman. I don't mean in a public place. I mean just the two or three of us when we were in a pub having a pint in a quiet corner. The attitude was completely different and where they'd been open in the past, they would just find it difficult to talk about most subjects. There were certain acquaintances became very difficult. The friendship dwindled over time. They didn't want to be seen with me.²² (Group B)

There was a minority (all in Group B) who found their fathers were disappointed that they were entering a menial occupation - not in keeping with the expectations of a grammar school education or skills they had acquired in industry. This does not indicate a lack of deference for the police but an expression of concern over a perceived lack of potential career development. The view held by the families of police officers could change dramatically following the policing of particular events, seen as being ruinous to the local community. However, examples provided by the narrators were confined to the miners' strikes of 1972, 1974, and 1984; periods outside the remit of this study.²³

²¹ 1st Interview JC.

²² 1st Interview TR.

²³ The rift caused in police families by policing tactics used during the miner's strike of 1984, feature in former South Shields constable, Adam Robertson's work. "From Dishforth to Durham: an autobiographical study of the changes in one person's development as a police officer viewed through the lens of the changes in views on policing and his consequent identity as a police officer, over 30 years". (MA diss., University of Sunderland, 2006).

The constables moved away from their former social contacts and spent far more of their leisure time with their new colleagues.²⁴ Two thirds of officers surveyed in the Royal Commission of 1960 found it difficult to form friendships outside of the force.²⁵ Those who had moved from other areas to join the police, particularly in the immediate post-war period, were unlikely to have established relationships in the town. The provision of a police social club, founded in the 1920s, provided a place where the culture of solidarity and isolationism was nurtured.²⁶ The club was the nucleus for sporting and social events and sold alcohol from 1947.²⁷ As with most other police forces, the development of sporting activities such as soccer, cricket, and bowls was encouraged.²⁸ This maintained a Victorian tradition of providing an outlet that fostered loyalty to the group.²⁹ The nature of the social relationships held with the constables changed from having a wide spectrum of associates to one concentrated on colleagues and their families; a feature evident in both generation groups.

Initial duties

Successful recruits were appointed to the force following an acceptance of employment; often there was a period between appointment and the commencement of the 13-week initial training course.³⁰ During this time they performed menial tasks assisting five long service constables driving the police van, delivering mail, repairing pedal cycles, cleaning outstations, and keeping the rear yard of the station tidy.³¹ This was a period of socialisation where the recruit, lacking any policing experience, was put to use.

²⁴ Reiner, 1978, 212. Refers to 'occupational community' providing solidarity with colleagues.

²⁵ Banton, 198.

²⁶ Renton-Gordon, 5.

²⁷ Watch Committee Minutes, 21/5/1947, South Shields Local Studies Library.

²⁸ The chief constable made several requests in the early 1950s for the purchase of a sports field; due to austerity measures these were denied. SSCAR, 1951.

²⁹ Shpaya-Makov, 2002, 230.

³⁰ The training centres South Shields constables attended were: Plawsworth, County Durham; Newby Wiske, North Yorkshire; Bruche, Lancashire; Mill Meece, Staffordshire; and RAF Dishforth, North Yorkshire.

³¹ The inefficient use of these constables caused concern to HMIC in 1967; as a result, civilian drivers replaced them. South Shields County Borough Watch Committee Minutes, 26 September 1966. 1955 – 1965. T179/335 and 336. Tyne and Wear Archives

The experience gained during this process was limited to becoming accustomed to the uniform, gaining awareness of police staff and buildings, and experiencing a less glamorous side of policing. All constables were required to travel to and from work in full uniform and deal with incidents they encountered *en route*. Thus, ratepayers received free police patrol by constables travelling to and from work in their own time. New recruits could struggle to deal with situations they came across and from the mid-1960s were permitted to travel wearing a civilian coat, until having completed their initial training.

The reception that recruits received from experienced constables was not always a welcome one. Some viewed probationers a risk as they were better educated and better trained.³²

They were not as well informed as you were theoretically; a lot of them had not been to a training school. The training schools I think came in around 1947. You had greater theoretical knowledge, but they had practical knowledge, they knew how to deal with things...how to deal with people. A lot of those at the training school were promoted after the war, not before.³³

As policing entered an age where radio communication, mobility, and technology became key skills, an image of the old time constable being beyond the capability of some tasks is appropriate.³⁴

Senior constables were not keen to share their 'easing' habits, drinking establishments, or methods of dealing with police incidents.³⁵ However, it would be easy to overstate this cold reception. Whilst somewhat remote and cold with recruits, it was rare for a colleague to leave another in a difficult position. The older constable had an underlying culture that recognised 'new blood' was not as hardened or as 'street wise' to the mores of society. Further, the recruit had a probationary period of two years, when they were subject to scrutiny by supervisors assessing their ability to perform the role and 'fit' into the organisation. There was a risk that under such stress they would inform on the activities of established constables. As a result, the

³² One narrator, FG, received no national training having joined the River Tyne Police early 1947.

³³ 1st Interview BA.

³⁴ Shpayer-Makov, 2002, 114. Argues a similar pattern emerged with the introduction of some technology in the early twentieth-century.

³⁵ Oral testimony suggests some constables had liaisons with women they wished to conceal.

recruit undertook a socialisation process to ensure they knew their place in the hierarchy of the ranks, and proved their reliability and loyalty.³⁶

This was not a new phenomenon, nor was it particular to South Shields.³⁷ Renton-Gordon noted his sense of isolation when he joined the South Shields force in 1921, "It was very difficult for the youngsters to get into the 'inner circle'."³⁸ There was little change in the approach shown to recruits by their older colleagues throughout this study. Entering the 'inner circle' or establishing acceptance, within their peer group, occurred only after they had shown they could be trusted:

They were remote to young constables they didn't want to know them. The sergeants, inspectors they remained friends with the older PCs. They didn't want to know the young pups who were coming on, for one reason... they couldn't be trusted. They didn't know me from Adam. They didn't know if I could keep my mouth closed when they were doing anything wrong. It was all down to trust. Once you were sent to an incident with a senior officer like a sergeant or inspector, or even a senior PC, a dicey incident where somebody could have been badly injured, that's when you formed a friendship.³⁹ (Group B)

There was a perpetuation of police culture (a continuity of tradition) from one generation of constables to another and by promotions from within. These provided a potential for favouritism or retribution to former peers by new supervision.⁴⁰ Due to acquired knowledge, supervisors were aware of constables' 'easing' activities and had a close understanding of their individual qualities. Police culture passed from generation to generation taking all the residues of previous tradition, whilst incorporating the new.

A traditional task recruits were required to perform was the destruction of animals. In 1947 a system of animal destruction via a coal gas chamber was provided.⁴¹ In September that year, an additional electrocution cabinet was provided.⁴² Dangerous and stray dogs were a significant problem in the town and increased motor vehicle use had fuelled road accidents involving

³⁶ The probationer was 'often ignored and resented' by more experienced officers. Weinberger, 1995, 29.

³⁷ A good overview of debates surrounding police culture has been written by Westmarland, 2008.

³⁸ Renton-Gordon, 16.

³⁹ 1st Interview TR.

⁴⁰ All promotions between 1947 -1968 were internal.

⁴¹ Watch Committee Minutes Volume 103 18/6/1947. South Shields Local Studies Library.

⁴² Watch Committee Minutes Volume 103 17/9/1947. South Shields Local Studies Library.

animals.⁴³ In total 16,233 dogs and a further 10,320 cats were destroyed by the police from 1947-1967.⁴⁴

Contemporary research argues that electrocution, and gassing, are the least humane methods of destroying an animal.⁴⁵ This form of animal euthanasia, rarely mentioned in police studies, was not unique to South Shields. The recruit came to absorb the function as an accepted part of policing. The reason for allocating such tasks to a probationer was to test his disposition and assist in 'character building'.⁴⁶ For many it was unsettling and unpalatable.

They had a compound in the yard with kennels in, you kept them for x number of days, and if they weren't claimed, they were put down. Guess who had to put them down? The would-be recruits, who were just filling in time, we had to put the cats and dogs down, either by electricity, or gassing them in a little gas chamber. I won't go into the details, but it wasn't very pleasant.⁴⁷ (Group B)

They had a gas box out in the yard, and you had a washer with a hole in the middle that they used to put in the meter, you had to put it through a lot of times just to make sure they were dead. Then you had to rake them out and leave them for the bin man to collect.⁴⁸ (Group B)

Those joining in the immediate post-war period who had experienced military discipline accepted such tasks without question. However, some were unable to kill the animals and convinced a civilian mechanic to do so on their behalf. This illustrates an extension of the police culture of protecting and hiding wrongdoings to include work colleagues, who were not police officers. Some recruits risked being disciplined by letting the animals escape.

I said, "I won't put a dog to sleep. It's just against my – the way I think." The mechanic, he did it, and said that I'd done it. Later on when I came back, after I'd done my training they sent me down the yard again when I was in the station to go down and put this dog down – I let it go [laughs]. I just opened the kennels it ran loose.⁴⁹ (Group A)

⁴³ In 1959, 111 dogs were killed in road accidents in South Shields. In 1965, this had increased to 196. SSCCAR, 1959 and 1965.

⁴⁴ SSCCARs, 1947-1966.

⁴⁵ Louisa Tasker. "Methods for the euthanasia of dogs and cats comparisons and recommendations." *World Society for the Protection of Animals*. N.d. <http://www.icam-coalition.org/downloads> (accessed May 20, 2011).

⁴⁶ Ian Patterson, *The Thick Blue Line: One Story of Policing 1963-1981*. (Bridgnorth: Get Publishing. 2006), 9.

⁴⁷ 1st Interview JB.

⁴⁸ 1st Interview GT.

⁴⁹ 1st Interview JC.

Tasking recruits with menial tasks reinforced their lowly status. Nonetheless, they were chores not requiring policing skills that had to be performed, seen as legitimate functions to allocate; police officers were required to acclimatise to unpleasant duties. On amalgamation with Durham Constabulary, stray dogs were stored at South Shields but no longer destroyed there. This form of socialisation was detraditionalised and other menial tasks, such as feeding prisoners, supervising them washing and shaving replaced it.

Several, who joined in the mid-1960s, saw this initial period as wasted time that could have been used to prepare them for future duties.

It was time wasted, they didn't really treat me that well. I was more or less, ignored. I used to do odd jobs for the mechanic, anything really. If there was a property store to clean out or jobs, the cleaners didn't do, or wouldn't do. I really felt a bit short changed because they had a training sergeant who could have taken me under his wing and given me some idea of what was expected at training school, but the opportunity was never taken.⁵⁰ (Group B)

Those who joined after 1960, held higher expectations of their new employers; they did not simply accept the nature of the duty assigned, or the treatment they received. They sought to know reasons for decisions and questioned methods used by first-line managers and established constables. This is indicative of the wider social detraditionalisation of the time.⁵¹ In the case of a probationary constable however, it would have been detrimental to their survival in the police to openly challenge the traditional status of supervision or to question, or refuse to carry out any orders made by the old social order. However, once established in the organisation it was easier to question decisions, although consultation on decisions only materialised openly following amalgamation.

When you were a probationer you didn't question what a sergeant said, you did it. Later on in service you used to question, I wasn't frightened to say, "Hold on now Sarg, if we do this, surely so and so and so and so would happen". So, you could discuss with the sergeant what procedure you were going to use. But in the borough you did what the sergeant said.⁵² (Group B)

Having experienced their initial socialisation process the recruit was sent to a district training centre for initial training.

⁵⁰ 1st Interview ABR.

⁵¹ David Cannadine. *Class in Britain*. London: Penguin, 1998, 155f.

⁵² 2nd Interview TR.

The training centre

Police training received some standardisation following the Desborough Committee report in 1919-1920.⁵³ However, consistent national police training for probationers only progressed after 1946, with the creation of district training centres.⁵⁴ This work does not examine in-depth the nature of the national training delivered; its aim is to examine working practices in a borough police force, inclusive of training.⁵⁵ However, national training had been introduced following the Post-war Committee recommendations and confirmed by the Oaksey Report in 1949, resulting in a national probationer training course, delivered in a residential 13-week period.⁵⁶ Central training was a key element of modernisation in small boroughs; they lacked the extensive training facilities of larger forces.⁵⁷ Nonetheless, much training was still done 'on the job' in smaller forces.⁵⁸ A sergeant delivered probationer training on a regular basis, and swimming lessons were mandatory in South Shields. Narrators considered localised training effective; any specialist training was sourced from outside.

The teaching at training centres consisted of learning legal definitions by rote. This developed to theory being tested in stage-managed practical scenarios. Discipline was enforced in a militaristic regime at the centres including daily parades; inspections; drill sessions; the bulling of boots; and some night-time patrol work around the centre.⁵⁹

Some constables (in Group B) believed their initial training course reinforced negative ideas of police image and discipline. Probationers at the training centre worked six days a week to comply with the amount of hours they were

⁵³ Reiner, 2000, 51.

⁵⁴ Training centres were established for all police regions in 1946. Jackson, 2006, 31.

⁵⁵ One narrator, a River Tyne Constable, received no national training.

⁵⁶ Home Office. *Report on the Committee of Conditions of Service Part Two* Cmnd. 7831 (London: HMSO, 1949), 11.

⁵⁷ George Berkley. "Centralization, Democracy and the Police." *The Journal of Criminal Law, Criminology, and Police Science* 61, no. 2 (June 1970): 309-312.

⁵⁸ Emsley, 1996, 206.

⁵⁹ Constables and sergeants were required to salute inspectors and above. Officers of all ranks saluted Judges, County Court Judges, and Magistrates. Instruction 3. *County Borough of South Shields, Police General Instructions*, 1953.

required to work. A constable, whose wife was expecting the birth of their first child, discovered she had entered labour on a Friday evening and requested leave from the centre (based at Northallerton, North Yorkshire).

This was refused:

You had to travel back on a Saturday, so you had about 24 hours at home. The baby was born on the Friday night, Saturday morning. I knew my wife had been taken into the hospital, I rang up, and I was told I was a proud father. I just wanted to be away and home, to make sure my wife and baby were all right. They wouldn't let me leave that Saturday morning. I had to get a bus to Northallerton to catch a train to Newcastle. I had to wait until the course finished at half past 11 before I was allowed to leave.⁶⁰ (Group B)

All narrators defined training centre discipline as strict with much drill, saluting and 'bulling' of boots. The accommodation was on military lines with sharing of dormitories. Police culture, nurtured by the environment, fostered a 'do what you are told' mentality. This was a necessary process as police officers operate in a disciplined regime where the ability to respond to instructions and procedures is integral. Recruits who had military service found the police experience easy to accept. Those who joined in the 1960s enjoyed the regimentation of drill; marching; saluting; and being indoctrinated into a unit.

The image of the police was a key concern at training centres, as one constable found when he discovered five pounds missing. He suspected a colleague had stolen it and reported the matter.

We'd been to Northallerton. I'd two half pints of beer, and some fish and chips. I got up the next morning, went into my wallet and there was money missing. I checked because I was in a dorm with five others. I had my suspicions; I knew I hadn't lost it. Eventually, I thought, 'I'm going to have to report this', so I reported to the sergeant, and he went through everything with me, "Right go and see the commandant."

I got the biggest dressing down, of my life. I was told that I'd been out on a drunken rampage, this was no way for a police officer to conduct himself off duty, and I shouldn't be out drinking, eating in the street, letting the force down. "You've obviously lost the money, or had too much to drink." It was a low point for me.

I very nearly resigned there and then. But, I thought, no. This is what you want to do, so let's get on with it. The remainder of the training went well. I finished top student in the class. After congratulating me, the commandant decided to mention the money episode again. It really took the shine off everything, because my parents were there, and he went through this again. I just felt saddened by it, disappointed, let down, unsupported.⁶¹ (Group B)

⁶⁰ 1st Interview ER.

⁶¹ 1st Interview AR. Incident occurred 1964.

The suspect escaped any form of investigation and the victim, converted into an offender, was expected to learn from the experience, not to land another policeman in trouble, and take greater care of his property. Image was instilled at the training centre by ensuring the smart appearance of officers and compliance with standards of behaviour. Similarly, the training centre was concerned with its own image and, in this instance, took steps to protect it.

Constables recalled a sense of camaraderie nurtured at the centre and whilst the discipline was harsh, it was accepted as part of initial training. The training itself, even with some practical scenarios, was mainly theoretical and not designed to prepare the constable for the pragmatics of policing.

It gave you the background to the job. Where I felt things could have gone on further, were how to deal with people particularly with prisoners. For example the interrogation technique training was very, very poor.⁶² (Group A)

Beat training

On returning to the town probationers reported for nightshift duty at police headquarters. Before being 'displayed' to the public during daylight hours they patrolled all the beats, accompanied by the incumbent constable and introduced to the routine of police work. Until 1964, they were required to perform at least seven weeks continuous nightshift.⁶³

The force operated a scheme where uniformed officers, allocated to a team, worked a series of shifts: 6am - 2 pm; 2pm – 10pm; and 10pm - 6am. Constables were required to parade on duty 15 minutes before the shift commenced. There were four teams, each supervised by an inspector and three sergeants. The shifts contained 'quick changes', where having completed a tour of duty, they returned for the next tour less than eight hours later. Constables, on a team, were allocated a beat for a seven week period before moving to a new one.⁶⁴ This meant over time they gained a good deal of local knowledge. Some beats, usually those on the outskirts of the town,

⁶² 1st Interview BA. Interrogation training was not provided in central training.

⁶³ One narrator confirmed he was the last to perform the extended nightshift, 1st interview ER.

⁶⁴ In 1963, there were 20 beats on three sections, 20/2/1963 Report by Chief Constable to Watch Committee for the period 1956-1967. TWA T179/591-593.

were bicycle beats. During staff shortages particular beats were 'doubled up' and constables instructed to patrol two adjacent beats thereby increasing the amount of vulnerable property for which they were responsible.

The chief constable suggested in 1949 that only constables qualified for promotion mentored probationers but there was little evidence such a method was employed.⁶⁵ Probationers were allocated to constables who often resented being told to accompany them.⁶⁶ During the seven weeks of nightshift the probationer worked with a wide selection of officers.⁶⁷

There were several key functions probationers had to learn: the geography of the beat; the location of police pillars and boxes; how to use the 'ringing in' system; identifying vulnerable property, and the idiosyncrasies they possessed (where safes and spyholes were located). However, nightshifts were very quiet and the opportunity to gain experience, other than checking property or dealing with drunks was limited. When patrolling on his own the probationer regularly had to learn by his mistakes.

They didn't train you to do anything, they just showed you. He would be there to show me what was on the beat, your licensed premises, banks and places where safes were, vulnerable premises. He would sort of educate you in relation to that beat and in the future when you were allocated that beat you would have some knowledge of what was on it.⁶⁸ (Group B)

On patrol, checking property

The probationer working nightshift and having 'seen out' customers from the public houses, would patrol the beat, physically checking property. The recorded number of premises found insecure measures the extent to which this task was performed (see Figure 5).⁶⁹ Commercial and licensed property received more attention than dwelling houses, thus there was a higher level of protection for the business ratepayer. However, there was a sharp decline in premises found insecure after 1957. A policy change that year required a

⁶⁵ SSCAR 1949, 8.

⁶⁶ Banton, 156.

⁶⁷ Probationers working on all the shift teams, accumulated experience of all supervision, and became known to them.

⁶⁸ 1st Interview GH.

⁶⁹ These figures were recorded in the SSCARs, until 1967.

crime prevention officer to visit commercial premises found insecure to provide advice and remind them of their responsibilities.⁷⁰ The chief constable reported that:

The crime prevention officer has paid 350 visits to different premises, 241 suggestions have been made, and in 115 cases, his recommendations were carried out.⁷¹

This was the first year in which the crime prevention officer targeted properties found insecure.⁷² Such a move marks a change from proactively seeking to find insecure premises, to reactively pursuing business owners to secure them.

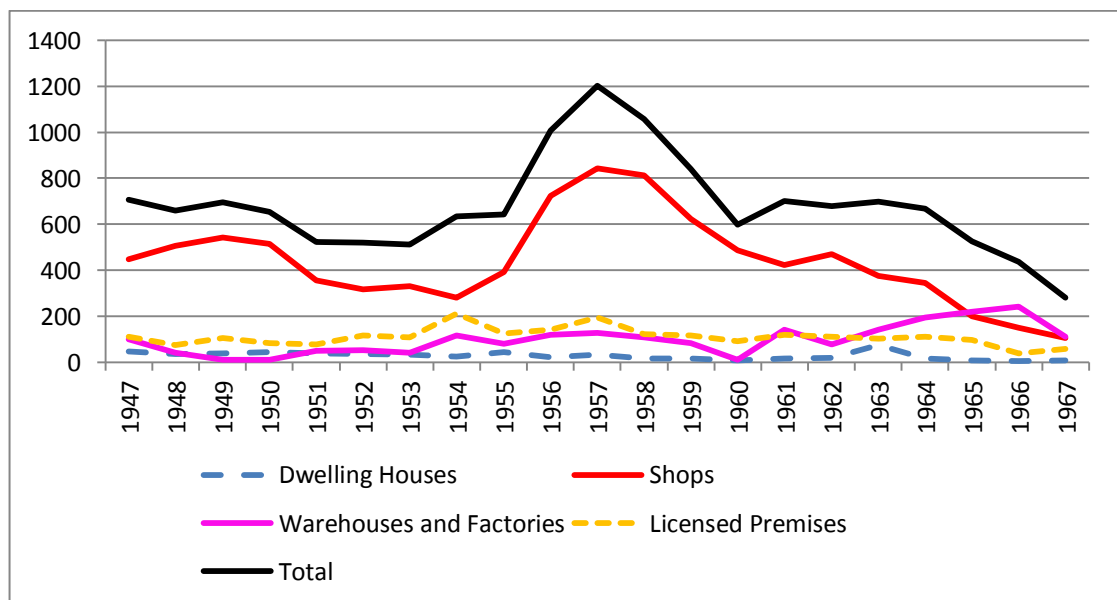


Figure 5: Property found insecure by beat patrol officers 1947-1967

Source: SSCCARs 1947-1967

An increased use of burglar alarms affected the security of premises. In 1958, nine premises had installed alarms on the advice of the crime prevention officer.⁷³ The following year a number of firms installed burglar

⁷⁰ A crime prevention officer was appointed in the early 1950s, he doubled as the scientific aides officer, 2nd interview NB.

⁷¹ SSCCAR, 1957.

⁷² Increased targeting of resources in the police was an aspect of modernisation. Paul Senior, Chris Crowther-Downey and Matt Long, *Understanding Modernisation in Criminal Justice*, (Maidenhead: Open University Press, 2007), 25.

⁷³ SSCCAR, 1958.

alarms, which automatically called the police station.⁷⁴ Increased vigilance by businesses; the beginning of a reliance on burglar alarms; and greater use of mobile patrols led to a reduction in premises found insecure.⁷⁵

Warehouses and factories were subject to robust external security checks from the early 1960s in response to increases in burglaries, specific premises were also checked internally.⁷⁶ This led to a rise in finding insecure windows, doors, and lights being left on.

The Bede Estate, you went every hour, you picked keys up from West Park Station; they had time clocks inside the factory. You had the key, opened the door went through the factory. Those time clocks ...you put a card in, pressed the card, and it was what time the police had checked it...on this card. Went back, locked the door again, and went. It was about three times a shift. It was a pushbike beat...up to these factories. I think there was three of them, you did this all the time. It was a bind, in bad weather when it was raining and snowing, pedalling up there to do them.⁷⁷ (Group A)

Constables failing to find insecure premises were summoned to attend headquarters to give an account for their inattention and sometimes subject to discipline for neglect of duty.

A lack of motor vehicles travelling during the night assisted beat constables. It enabled them to listen more carefully as there was little noise to stifle the sound of those breaking into properties. The quiet was an effective aid to surveillance.

If anything happened on your beat, you noticed it. You would walk around, it was dead quiet, because there were no vehicles. You weren't in a panda car, you heard it.⁷⁸ (Group B)

A newsagents and tobacconists shared the back yard on a corner. We thought we heard a scuffling in the yards, so we just stood into the shadows and a box of cigarettes comes over the wall. Then chummy comes over and was captured. In the first three weeks I caught my first, and probably my one and only, burglar.⁷⁹ (Group B)

Checking vulnerable property (or 'listed premises', as there was a list of them to visit) was an important but mundane aspect of patrol.

⁷⁴ SSCCAR, 1959.

⁷⁵ Early alarms were simple systems of connectors on the door and its stanchion, breaking the connection activated the alarm. Property was considered insecure if it had a strange light illuminated or a normal light was not showing.

⁷⁶ Housebreaking and shop breaking offences increased 224% (177-574) from 1959-1967. SSCCARs 1959-1967.

⁷⁷ 1st Interview JC.

⁷⁸ 1st Interview ER.

⁷⁹ 1st Interview AR.

That was the worst part, having to go try the door handles all night long...used to have 'listed premises', you would have to go and check those religiously during the nightshift and indicate in your pocket book that you had actually visited them, and what time. Co-ops, were very vulnerable... wherever they stored cigarettes, those places you always visited. There was always about four or five on your beat you had to put in your pocket book. It was just shaking hands with door handles, all night. You were glorified security men.⁸⁰ (Group B)

Discipline

The probationer had to ensure that he gained the respect of his sergeant who compiled regular reports on his performance. The confidential reports carried the ultimate recommendation of dismissal should the probationer be considered inefficient. Feedback conveyed to the probationer did not always reflect that written in the report, as described by those who had access to them.

It was only when you had occasion, as I did, to read those reports that you could realise how damaging they could be. They could do a character assassination of you. Give an opinion, which didn't require corroboration. They had power of almost life and death over you. They could get you dismissed just by this system of reports - 'In my opinion this man will never make an efficient police constable'.⁸¹ (Group A)

There was a couple who you thought were all right, but later on when you had a look at your record, they were stabbing you in the back.⁸² (Group B)

This sergeant was always a pleasant fellow and I looked at his reports. He'd put on...I forget who the PC was, "Looked around this officer's beat for half an hour without success; he was nowhere to be found". Nothing was done about it, but this would be put on his records and when he did find him he was all pleasant but put that in his report, without telling him.⁸³ (Group A)

The mechanisms available to 'target' constables, particularly probationers, including disciplinary action was considerable; and made all the easier because of the nature of the duties performed. The shift patterns included 'quick changes' and the majority of officers relied on public transport. As a result, being late for work was a common occurrence. If an officer was late for the shift parade which started 15 minutes prior to the start of duty, (for which he was not paid), he was liable to discipline charges. The chief constable would see offenders on Saturday evenings in their own time and they received fines or reprimands. Repeat offences resulted in a heavier

⁸⁰ 1st Interview ER.

⁸¹ 1st Interview BA.

⁸² Interview RB

⁸³ 2nd Interview AJ.

fine. For example, in 1962, PC White appeared before the chief constable for failing to report for duty and was reprimanded. He committed a similar offence in December that year and fined £1 (a day's wage).⁸⁴ The severity of punishment tended to reflect prior behaviour.⁸⁵ Nonetheless, as in other forces, discipline for constables was harsh.⁸⁶ However, even minor offending by probationers could result in dismissal. The tendency to apply harsh discipline continued even when there were difficulties in recruiting.⁸⁷

The failure to ensure telephone calls were made to headquarters from a box or pillar within three minutes of the required time without good cause, was a common offence; one which had sergeants lying in wait to capture offenders.⁸⁸ Offences for which probationers could face dismissal included gossiping; being off ones beat; being found 'easing' (for example, having a cup of tea); and overstaying time in a police box. Often higher ranks abused their position to bully, coerce, or intimidate those serving under them.⁸⁹ Examples of such behaviour were common in the testimonies of the narrators.

There were pedantic issues sergeants observed as potential indicators that a probationer was likely to be 'unfit'. The following is a typical example from 1956.

There was a military tattoo in the Marine Park; it was seven o'clock, a summer's night. I walked down Ocean Road with the sergeant – in those days you wore white gloves, and I had one white glove on, and the other in my hand I hadn't both gloves on. He says, "Why are you walking along with one glove on and one off?" I said, "Oh, I didn't realise." "Put it on man", he says, "You look slovenly." I put the other glove on and walked along. I put my hand behind my back, he says, "Why aren't you swinging your arms?" I said, "It's just the way I walk." He says, "Walk properly, you're walking along all slovenly." So we got there, and he says, "I want you to stand on this crossing and see the people across, until I come back." This was about seven thirty. I stood there I must have seen about 40 people across the road, there wasn't much traffic about. Two or three cars came past, I was stood in the middle of the road, wasting my time. I stood at the side of the road, I was doing no good in the middle. He comes up behind me, this sergeant, "I told you to stand in the centre of the road." I said, "There's no traffic, there's no one wants to come across the road, if anyone wants to come across, I'll be here." "Don't argue with me,

⁸⁴ Reports to the Watch Committee by the Chief Constable for the period 1956-1967 (TWAR T179/591-593 refers)

⁸⁵ A trend identified by Emsley, 1996, 237.

⁸⁶ Loader and Mulcahy, 202.

⁸⁷ Emsley, 2009, 242.

⁸⁸ Robert Mark. *In the Office of Constable*. (Glasgow: Collins, 1978), 22.

⁸⁹ Weinberger, 1995, 59.

do as you're told, and stand in the centre of the road." I stood there for another two hours until this event finished.⁹⁰ (Group A)

However, others recalled that sergeants could assist and help them to learn the job by giving practical advice.

They were quite helpful, they would tell you how to do things, and show you how to do things. I learned that if you did your job they would accept you.⁹¹ (Group A)

Sergeants held a role of supervising men who were adept at 'easing' and accustomed to patrolling beats 'their' way', generally unhindered by supervision. The authority and image portrayed by a sergeant to his men was one requiring respect. How a sergeant addressed both the petty and serious disciplinary offences he discovered, was a measure of his efficiency.

Drinking on duty

Historically, drinking on duty has been a common feature of policing.⁹² The custom decreased after the First World War due to changes in working class drinking habits. Nonetheless, it was still a cause for dismissal.⁹³ All the narrators had experience of drinking or being taken for drinks on duty, (two were teetotal).⁹⁴ Narrators defined two types of drinking on duty: first, an accepted 'easing' activity, and second, a distinct misconduct activity, one that they themselves saw as being inappropriate. 'Easing', as identified in chapter one, are activities where the constable seeks an escape from the tiresome, boring routine of duty, that offers a break from inclement weather and respite from constant walking. They are by definition, discipline offences. Police historians argue that beat constables prior to the Second World War, did not consider accepting a drink from a pub licensee as an illegitimate practice.⁹⁵ In South Shields, this tradition continued well after the war. This created conflict and tension between tradition and the law. It was a disciplinary offence to be on licensed premises in uniform without permission (unless in the execution of duty), and to be unfit for duty through

⁹⁰ 1st Interview JC.

⁹¹ 2nd Interview FD.

⁹² Taylor identified it as a prime disciplinary offence in the nineteenth century. Taylor, 1997, 57.

⁹³ Klein, 2010, 31.

⁹⁴ This does not include the special constable.

⁹⁵ Klein, 2010, 206.

drunkenness.⁹⁶ It was also a criminal offence for publicans to sell or supply any liquor to any constable on duty, unless by the authority of his superior officer.⁹⁷ Nonetheless, many publicans accepted, and continued to supply drink to constables.

Sergeants and inspectors knew who drank on duty without condoning it. Those found drinking could be subject to discipline. The paradox of this situation was evident when sergeants took constables, including probationers, on official pub visits when there was an expectation that they would consume pints of beer. Thus, they provided continuity and a level of legitimacy, to the tradition of drinking on duty.

The sergeant he'd call you on your beat and say, "Come on we're going to do the pubs" then you'd just walk in, walk around the pub and come out again and go to the next one, unless he was looking for anything in particular. Quite often you'd get an offer of a pint, depending on who you were with. Certain sergeants wouldn't put themselves in a position that way, others would get away in the back and have a drink.⁹⁸ (Group B)

You couldn't depend on them, (drunken PCs) that was the only problem. This particular day this lad could hardly stand. God, they got away with murder, [laughs] but the same lad was still a good policeman, when he was sober, you know.⁹⁹ (Sgt describing a heavy drinking PC)

By the late 1960s, it was less evident that probationers would be taken for drinks. But if the probationer was detailed to work with older constables, it was routine practice. Older constables, particularly former servicemen, were held in awe by many of their younger peers. Constables viewed drinking on duty and drinking in general, as an expression of masculinity.

The following incident was not as unusual as the constable believes.

I had a few pints of beer and the odd curry on duty, which was unusual for a recruit to be shown that sort of habit. The older policemen accepted me quite readily, drinking on duty was a regular occurrence for the old borough men, bear in mind that a lot of them had been serving soldiers during the war, and had a long distinguished war history.¹⁰⁰ (Group B)

⁹⁶ *County Borough of South Shields, Police General Instructions*, 1 (section 21 being on licensed premises), 2 (section 4 it was an offence to be under the influence of drink i.e. unfit for duty).

⁹⁷ Section 142, Licensing Act 1953, as cited in W.J. Williams. *Moriarty's Police Law*. 16th edition. (London: Butterworths, 1961), 481.

⁹⁸ 1st Interview GH.

⁹⁹ 1st Interview FD.

¹⁰⁰ 1st Interview GT.

The relationship between publicans and constables was such that offering pints of beer was an accepted custom. A constable, who joined in 1963, recalled being introduced to drinking during his first nightshift; another describes his first drink with a sergeant:

He said [constable], "I'm taking you for a pint lad, and if you say anything about it, you'll be in trouble. You'll be in hot water. You'll have to deal with me." I remember going into some back yard, you didn't know which pub it was because you only knew the back doors of them. I remember just standing there, and taking a sip of this pint which a barmaid had shoved out into the back yard. I took a sip, and by that time, the older policeman had swallowed the whole pint and was looking at me, as if I was stupid. He said, "If you can't drink it lad, give it to me I'll drink it." With me trying to force it down, he was away out of the back yard. I knew that if I didn't drink it quick and catch him, I wouldn't know where he'd gone. I gulped it down and charged after him. That was my first experience of having a pint.¹⁰¹ (Group B)

The sergeant was bad tempered, the old school. He said, "We'll do some pubs", so we went to a pub down Laygate, there's a couple of pints brought in front of us. I took a couple of sips; I wasn't a beer drinker. He's got his empty glass, he looks and I've drank about that much [indicates an inch]. He says, "Come on, we haven't got all night". I said, "I'm sorry, I'm not a drinker". He says, "Give us it here" and he drank it. Put the clock forward two years he was retiring. I was back at West Park and he comes and says, "This is my last shift with you, I want to take you for a drink", goes into another pub gets two pints, I picks mine up and goes [imitates drinking a pint in one go] he says, "By Christ, you've learned" [laughs].¹⁰² (Group A)

Sergeants expected constables to know their beat, including publicans and their customers, and tested such knowledge during visits to pubs. In 1950, there were 12,395 'official' visits to licensed premises. In 1967, when police patrols were more mobile there was still a significant number at 2175, providing plentiful opportunity to drink.¹⁰³

When constables were discovered drinking on duty, they accepted they would be punished. Thus many constables were wary of sergeants and inspectors and would curtail their drinking to a swift pint and move on. If caught, punishment took various forms apart from formal discipline. In one case, all publicans in a particular area were instructed not to serve a constable when he was on duty:

One PC was always drinking. I put him on a beat, up at Marsden. I went round every pub, and told the manager, "If I catch him in here, then I'll do him and I'll do

¹⁰¹ 1st Interview AD.

¹⁰² 1st Interview JC.

¹⁰³ SSCARs 1947-1967. Sergeants were required to count and record customers conduct in a register.

you". They wouldn't serve him. He towed the line, at least I think he did, because then I'd get a little bit of work from him, the odd report coming in, or if you sent out an enquiry, I would get it back, before that you couldn't rely on him to do anything.¹⁰⁴

Supervisors often dealt with discipline offences informally (in a similar manner to that described above), but such punishment was largely concealed behaviour.¹⁰⁵ There was a constant game of 'cat and mouse' between the constable, attempting to avoid capture, and some supervision who knew the places where a pint could be obtained. Each knew the risks of drinking on duty and accepted them. The sergeants knew that most constables would partake of a regular pint. Some would turn a blind eye and others sought to capture offenders.

Constables defined being: drunk on duty; unavailable for tasks due to drinking (thus placing more work on others and being unavailable to assist them if needed); and trespassing on other officers beats to drink, as counter to accepted traditional 'easing' behaviour. It was fundamental to the police psyche that constables should be able to hold their drink; and not compromise the force's reputation.¹⁰⁶ Those who did not 'abuse the system' were annoyed when others spoiled the relationships they had built with publicans. They held a similar view of those who exploited the 'good nature' of proprietors of fish and chip shops, and curry houses. In composing their narrative, many narrators talked of what 'they' did i.e. other officers, in recalling issues of drinking on duty indicating that even fifty years after the event, they remained cautious of discussing the subject.

Some went out on nightshift with the objective of eating as much curry and drinking as much as they could, which wasn't me, I wasn't a drinker then. I used to get a bit worried about going into the backs of Indian restaurants while they were wolfing curry down, and trying to sneak into pubs and what have you, in case the inspector came and caught you.¹⁰⁷ (Group B)

An unofficial police code operated in South Shields; it was accepted practice that many, but not all, would have pints of beer whilst performing foot patrol duty. Some young officers found it difficult not to conform to the expectations

¹⁰⁴ 2nd Interview FD.

¹⁰⁵ Punch, 31.

¹⁰⁶ Joanne Klein. "Quiet and Determined Servants and Guardians: Creating Ideal English police officers, 1900-1945." In *A History of Police and Masculinities, 1700-2010*, edited by David G Barrie and Susan Broomhall, 201-216. Abingdon: Routledge, 2012, 206.

¹⁰⁷ Interview RB.

of their peers (as in the example above) indicating the level of individualism and agency afforded to them was on such occasions absent. Narrators confirmed that the contemporary social stigma of drinking and driving was not evident in police culture. Even in the late 1960s, police action against drivers was reserved for those who were drunk, rather than those who had consumed alcohol in excess of the legal limit. Driving panda patrol cars did not stop constables from drinking on duty. Whilst customary methods of patrol changed, the tradition of drinking on duty did not.

Following amalgamation with Durham Constabulary a panda driver noticed that a sports club was open after hours. He parked the panda and entered via the back door, to have a pint.

Had my pint and he (club steward) came through with another one. He said, "Someone in the bar's just bought you a pint, they saw you coming in". I poked my head around the corner and said, "Thanks very much", it was Alec Muir, the chief constable [laughs]. I gave it to the steward and left quickly.¹⁰⁸ (Group B)

Members of the public could see police officers drinking in pubs when they stood in a small bar called 'the snug' (separated from the main bar by a pane of frosted glass).¹⁰⁹ The working class public knew, and accepted, that police officers drank on duty. However, constables subject to discipline charges for accessing excessive free alcohol, or whose behaviour had a negative effect on the performance of their duty, received little sympathy from colleagues.

Wastage

The Home Office working parties found wastage (personnel resigning their post prior to retirement) significantly affected the resourcing of the police (see chapter four).¹¹⁰ Their report concluded that in forces where the unemployment rate was high, they expected less wastage.¹¹¹ There was a national annual wastage rate of 1,795 (2.4%) from 1960-1965 when the general unemployment rate was 2.2 per cent.¹¹² Where the unemployment

¹⁰⁸ 1st Interview PL. Muir was the chief constable of Durham Constabulary 1950-1970.

¹⁰⁹ Various designs of public houses included 'snugs'. Paul Jennings, *The Local: A History of the English Pub*, (Stroud: The History Press, 2007).

¹¹⁰ Home Office, 1967.

¹¹¹ *Ibid*, 21.

¹¹² Premature wastage was the loss of officers other than by retirement or dismissal, figures from Home Office, 1967, 59.

rate was higher than the national average, the expectation was that the rate of people leaving a force voluntarily would be lower.

The official findings in the northern region generally support this notion but in South Shields, Gateshead and Middlesbrough, the official average annual premature wastage was 2.5 per cent, 4.2 per cent and 3.5 per cent respectively, compared to the national rate of 2.4 per cent. The north regional unemployment rate was 3.8 per cent and the national rate 2.2 per cent.¹¹³ The northern regional average voluntary wastage was below the national rate, at 1.5 per cent (see Table12).¹¹⁴

South Shields had a higher rate of annual voluntary premature wastage than the national and regional average; it also had higher unemployment rates, normally twice the national rate. Contrary to the findings of the Home Office working parties, the town's official rate of wastage was higher than expected (although the actual numbers were low, four people per annum). There is no evidence to suggest that the amount of wastage experienced in South Shields caused any undue concern to senior management; there was a constant supply of applicants to fill any vacancies created.¹¹⁵ Nonetheless, there are clear differences in the amounts of wastage among northern forces. The potential efficiency savings created by not having to recruit an additional 73 officers a year, to replace those who had left, are obvious.

However, an examination of the Appointments Book from 1 January 1960 to the 31 March 1966 provides conflicting data to that submitted to the Home Office. During this period, 33 constables who joined from January 1960 to January 1965 had voluntarily resigned (a further 13 were dismissed). This increases wastage for the force considerably compared to the published official data (from 2.5% to 4.1%). The data compiled from the Appointments Book (which conforms to the definitions supplied in the Home Office report) presents a minimum score as many entries are missing from the book. It is difficult to see what benefit there would be to the force to falsify these records other than enhancing their image. This finding acts as a reminder to

¹¹³ Ibid, 56.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

researchers of the apparent discrepancies in some official documents. The revised figures support the testimonies of the narrators that many constables, particularly probationers, left the force due to their inability to accept the harsh regime.¹¹⁶ The lack of individualism the job offered and a detraditionalised personal approach that rejected the conformist authoritarian supervision of the police was no doubt responsible for many of the resignations.

Table 12: Northern area voluntary premature wastage (men) 1960-1965

Source: Home Office, 1967, 56-59.

Force	Average Annual Voluntary Premature Wastage	Average Annual strength	Premature Wastage as a Percentage of Strength	Unemployment Rate
Northumberland	7	639	1.1	
Tynemouth	2	123	1.6	
Newcastle	8	532	1.5	
South Shields	4	158	2.5	
Gateshead	11	165	4.2	
Durham County	3	1,560	0.7	
Sunderland	12	269	1.1	
N R Yorkshire	10	641	1.9	
Middlesbrough	9	282	3.5	
Cumberland, Westmoreland and Carlisle	9	578	1.6	
Northern Total	73	4,947	1.5	3.8
National Total	1795	75,049	2.4	2.2
Amended South Shields data	6.6	158	4.1	

It is difficult to compare the rate of male wastage in the South Shields force in the immediate post-war years, to that of the final decade of the force's

¹¹⁶ The Royal Commission 1960 placed emphasis on wastage and difficulties in recruiting on poor pay and conditions of service. Home Office, 1967, 22, recommended moves towards efficiency (employment of civilians), and the delivery of man-management training.

existence, as access to personnel records is restricted. Table 13, relies on data available in the Appointments Book, in which 46 per cent of entries are missing for the latter group, Group B.¹¹⁷ On amalgamation new personnel records were established, and the old, including the Appointments Book, fell into disuse. The actual rate of voluntary resignations in Group B would be higher if the unknown wastage rate in the incomplete entries were included.

Table 13: Voluntary wastage of Groups A and B

Source: Appointments Book

	Volunteered to Resign	Dismissed or Required to Resign	Not Known
Group A 1948-1957	39.5 %	4%	10%
Group B 1958-1968	32%	9%	46%

From 1947-1965, 28.5 per cent of probationers were dismissed, required to resign or voluntarily resigned. Of all constables recruited, 36.5 per cent left the force within five years. In total, over 40 per cent left the force prematurely, (these figures do not include those retiring on medical pension or on transfer). As well as enduring a harsh regime there was little scope for promotion or advancement in the force. Narrators indicate this was another reason why many men resigned outside of their probation.

Probationers who committed disciplinary offences were dealt under the auspices of delivering poor performance; rather than being charged under discipline regulations. Nineteen such probationers were dismissed, or required to resign (see Table 14). Because their misdeeds were not recorded, what happened to them and what they had done, remains a hidden event. Of the constables disciplined between 1960-1968 (who had completed their probation), one was required to resign and another resigned prior to a hearing. The majority of offences resulted in fines (28.2%) and

reprimands (22.5%). Being drunk or found on licensed premises accounted for 22 per cent of all disciplinary offences. The largest category of offence was neglect of duty (46%).¹¹⁸

Table 14: Dismissals and resignations by length of service 1947-1965¹¹⁹

Source: Appointments Book

Probationers Dismissed by Regulation	19
Probationer Resigned	52
Resigned 2-5 years	20
Resigned 6 -10 years	7
Resigned over 11 years	3
Total Officers Resigning	101
Total Recruits in the period	249

These figures give an indication of the difficult conditions under which some probationary constables felt they operated. There is no evidence to suggest that this was of particular concern to the force.

Conclusion

Tradition contains strong elements of continuity. This becomes evident when examining common experiences of new recruits introduced to policing. Many aspects of policing in the post-war period were similar to those to be found in earlier decades and the nineteenth-century; mundanely patrolling a beat, checking property, drinking on duty, elements of solidarity in the police community, and harsh discipline regimes. However, whilst performing similar duties to their earlier peers constables were operating in a more sophisticated society, under dissimilar conditions, with some constables holding different expectations. Yet many traditional approaches continued to be endorsed and indoctrinated by older constables, and some supervision.

¹¹⁸ Lock and Rigg, 1994.

¹¹⁹ Data allows for the inclusion of officers who had completed two years' service prior to the amalgamation of the force. Not all entries were complete; the table therefore offers the minimum scores.

Many aspects of police occupational culture traverse generational differences with slight changes that take into account the idiosyncrasies of individuals and some change in social attitudes. There was continuity in the tradition of socialisation in the police organisation. This included a departure from former friends and associates and the cementing of a new social life formed around the police community. Previous associates realised that former friends, who were now constables, represented an office held at some distance by the community. Fraternity between police officers served to cement solidarity within the police organisation, in many cases this replaced the constables' previous social life.

Families remained loyal to their sons, and were considered to be proud that they were police officers. However, some parents in the 1960s expressed concern at the lack of potential career development offered by a job traditionally seen as requiring basic skills; others continued to foster a dislike of the police. The relationship between the working class and the police was at its best during and immediately following the Second World War; yet that relationship was one still guarded with suspicion. Accounts of the public avoiding the police in the street and moving out of their way in the immediate post-war period are symptoms of disassociation, as well as fear.

Probationers occupied the lowest strata of a traditional hierarchy in which they were subservient, until gaining elements of trust from their peers. This position was reinforced by the allocation of menial unpopular tasks; a tradition that continued beyond amalgamation, although the nature of the tasks changed.

Police training indoctrinated a disciplined, militaristic approach, to performing duty. It emphasised image, obedience and loyalty to what the organisation represented, whilst instilling a sense of tradition. The training cultivated awareness of shared experience that assisted in a bonding process reminding police officers, even though they belonged to their various forces, that they were part of a national institution. Whilst some narrators had difficult encounters at training school, they all displayed a sense of nostalgia and recalled pride in completing a challenging course.

Those who had joined the police before 1946 did not receive any central training. Therefore, as probationer constables entered the service over the following decades there were divisions between the older (untrained) and younger (trained) constable. The older generation, guardians of tradition, looked upon 'new blood' with some suspicion. However, attendance at national police training centres became a common feature of joining the police. Training, previously delivered locally, was now provided to a consistent standard following a national syllabus. This centrally controlled function reduced some of the influence of indoctrination held by local forces.

Beat constables were required to physically check the security of property; this task remained a traditional role of the foot beat constable. However changes in the way they patrolled their beats, particularly with the introduction of greater mobility, more reliance on technology (including burglar alarms) and proactive crime prevention initiatives, led to fewer insecure premises being found. Such changes in patrol work did not lead to less crime. While insecure property fell by 76.6 per cent from 1957-1967, shop breaking offences increased by 404 per cent.¹²⁰ This is indicative of increases in crime rates and an escalating reliance on reactive rather than proactive police methods.

The majority of beat work was routine, boring, mundane and carried out in all weathers; ingredients that encouraged 'easing' behaviour. The probationer was introduced to 'easing', including drinking on duty, during his initial seven weeks of nightshift. Older constables, and publicans, viewed having a pint on duty as an acceptable traditional pastime but one requiring care to avoid disciplinary punishment. Probationers, aware of the potential of dismissal if caught drinking were placed in a dilemma when with older constables. They had to choose between gaining the trust of peers balanced against the risk of dismissal. The pressure to conform made it difficult for probationer constables to exercise individualism and placed them in an uncomfortable position. Nonetheless, probationers in time became fully-fledged constables and continued this tradition whilst recognising accepted and unaccepted

¹²⁰ SSCCARs, 1957-1967.

standards of drinking behaviour. Some probationers found such easing behaviour unnerving and opted to avoid drinking on duty, if they could.

Premature wastage of constables was higher in South Shields than official records indicate. Whilst the Home Office and HMIC were concerned with wastage nationally, some borough forces continued to 'manage' resources in a traditionally strict (if not petty) disciplinarian fashion. However, national training in man-management was becoming increasingly available and recognised as a need by the HMIC.¹²¹ In March 1967, a chief inspector from South Shields attended a man-management course; he was required to pass his findings onto others.¹²² Improvements to the way supervisors treated their men were not apparent until after amalgamation in 1968. Those constables who could not accept the stifling 'cultural conditions' offered by the job were left with little option but to conform, meekly accept their situation or find alternative employment.

¹²¹ HMICAR, 1967 reported working parties identified a lack of man management training, suggesting a need.

¹²² Reports to the Watch Committee by the Chief Constable 1956 – 1967. TWAR T179/591 – 593.

Chapter 6: Detraditionalisation of poverty, prostitution, suicide and decision-making

Introduction

Policing works within a social dynamic, where changes in society influence variations in police tactics.¹ Such change can result in the eradication of social conditions that created problems for the police and wider society; and create new ones. Chapter three examined how post-war rebuilding programmes and the urban design of the Tyne Dock area affected the make-up of communities, detraditionalising the living conditions of those who lived and worked in the areas modernised. Reconstruction led to the building of new towns in many regions of the country.² In South Shields, it resulted in new housing estates on the outskirts of the town and other areas offering better housing conditions to those existing before the war. The post-war police were service driven. Constables were in close contact with those who lived and worked on the beats they patrolled.³ Therefore, as the reconstructed areas changed so too did the communities policed.

South Shields, during 1947-1968 was not affluent and its working class population suffered hardship, particularly in the austerity years immediately following the war. This chapter explores some of the changes brought about by the modernisation process in the town and explores the experience constables had when engaging with detraditionalised social issues, such as poverty, suicide, and prostitution; and how they used discretion when making decisions. It identifies how the modernisation process influenced those experiences.

¹ Senior, Crowther-Dowey and Long, 60, place the development of policing as intrinsically linked to changes in urbanisation. Such a link relates to both 'orthodox' and 'revisionist' accounts of police history.

² The nearest 'new town' to South Shields was Washington completed in 1964, 12 miles away. Burnett, 294.

³ Banton, 22. Found constables chronicling duties such as tying children's shoelaces, taking children home and posting letters for the elderly.

Poverty

Following the Second World War the Beveridge plan failed to deliver the expected benefit of national insurance; unemployment benefit was time limited, and payments means tested.⁴ The main cause of poverty in Britain was inadequate earnings and unemployment. In 1948, low wages had received little attention. This had negative consequences for the low paid in future years.⁵ Family allowances were meagre and even in the early 1960s, 3.8 per cent of the population were living below the national assistance scale.⁶ In 1960, 14.4 per cent of the population were living on low or very low income.⁷ The national rise of affluence in the mid-1950s was not as broadly based than had been supposed, and the 1960s saw the 'rediscovery of poverty'.⁸

In 1957, the rate of unemployment in the northern region was 1.5 per cent, slightly better than the national level, although in successive years the gap grew. By 1962 the national rate was 2.1 per cent and the northern regional rate was 3.7 per cent.⁹ However, rates of unemployment in South Shields were higher than both (see Figure 6). The more austere environment of the working-class town with its high rates of unemployment ensured that the constable was aware of, and concerned with, the level of poverty that existed.

⁴ Atkinson, A B. "Distribution of Income and Wealth." In *Twentieth-century British Social Trends*, edited by A H Hasley and Josephine Webb, 348-381. (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 2000), 372.

⁵ Obelkevich and Catterall, 119.

⁶ Atkinson, 373. The scale was the criterion for eligibility to receive national assistance.

⁷ Obelkevich and Catterall, 120.

⁸ Osgerby, 1988, 64.

⁹ Figures from South Shields Medical Officers Annual Reports 1947 -1963, and Department of Employment and Productivity, *British Labour Statistics: Historical Abstract 1886-1986*. (London: HMSO, 1971).

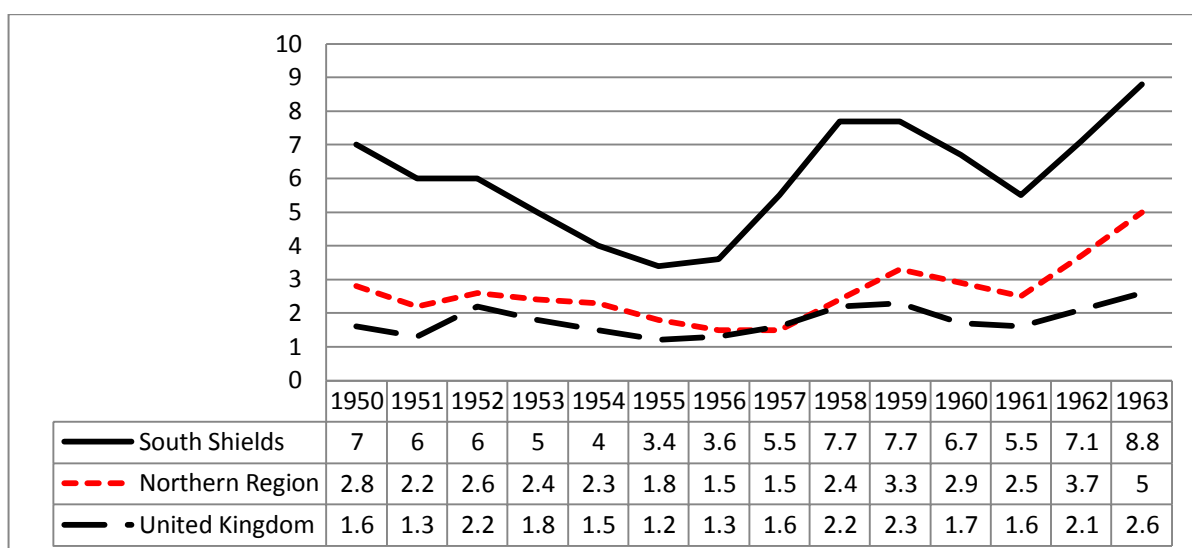


Figure 6: Percentage of people unemployed in South Shields, the northern region and the United Kingdom

Source: South Shields Medical Officers Annual Reports 1947 -1963, and Department of Employment and Productivity, *British Labour Statistics: Historical Abstract 1886-1986*. (London: HMSO, 1971).

Austerity was evident to post-war constables when patrolling the beat. They recall various strata of poverty, identifying ill-educated, unclean people at one level, and those who, because of the austere economic situation suffered severe need in another. Constables from Group A working in the immediate post-war era, when the welfare state was in its infancy, had a good deal of sympathy (and empathy) with the needy. They were often the first point of contact with them.¹⁰ They became accustomed to the living conditions of the impoverished and experienced conditions of domestic pest infestation, squalor and ignorance:

There was a woman who had children of various ages, to various men. She wasn't a prostitute or anything like that, it was just she was an ignorant woman. She couldn't read, as a result she came and asked the policeman to read her letters, they were invariably bills of course. When you walked past the house, you used to step out towards the kerb because of the smell. This day I'm passing and a voice shouted, I knew she was pregnant, I went in and your feet were sticking to the floor. The total furniture was a bed, with an army blanket and a chair, which should have had four legs, but only had three. She's sitting on that chair and saying the baby was coming. I went to one of the neighbours and persuaded her, reluctantly, to go in. She wouldn't, she stood at the door keeping an eye on her while I went and got an ambulance. The children were in the house. There was a grey haze over the bed; it was fleas. The wallpaper, the little bit there was of it, was moving with bugs. In the back room - it was only a two-roomed flat - there was buckets of urine and faeces and some was on the floor. The only food in the house was a couple of boiled potatoes and hard crusty bread. It was as hard as a brick. I had to take the

¹⁰ Emphasising Banton's view that the police were service driven. Banton, 1964.

children into care. She delivered the baby and I think they tied her tubes after that, to stop her having any more. That was a typical scene. I know of many instances of police officers like myself, having to be deloused because of handling people that lived in such poverty.¹¹ (Group A)

The unique smell associated with poor dwellings was often due to the infestation of bedbugs. Ravetz suggests that that one method of eradicating this unique odour was by disinfecting people's furniture when they moved from slum clearance areas into new council housing.¹²

The police helped those in poverty in several ways including reading letters and documents for the illiterate, assisting in the purchase of items (often using their own money), referring them to other agencies or providing children with shoes and socks.¹³ Police Aided Clothing Associations (PACAs) were common in the country; in South Shields the police administered a fund supplying shoes and socks to children.¹⁴

If you couldn't afford any shoes, you applied at the police station. The policeman would interview the applicant, to find out how many children they had, what their income was, and submit a report back to the police station. If they were approved, they used to go to Flemming's shoe shop in Station Road. Every shoe they issued, they punched a hole in it. So they would know if it was from the shoeless children's fund, so you couldn't sell them. I did many of them enquiries.

I remember it had finished by 55 or so. I did some up in Elsmere Street. There was a lot of poverty up there the houses were clean, but they were very limited with furniture. A lot of people were unemployed, come out of the services, and they were unemployed. Work was picking up in the shipyards, but it wasn't full boom then, but it was coming on, there was still a need for the shoeless children's fund.¹⁵ (Group A)

Some narrators when they were children needed use of the fund themselves, indicating how men of a similar background and who could empathise with poverty, policed the community.¹⁶ One recalled his experiences as a child.

I remember walking around in the rain, and I was walking on cardboard. My father could repair shoes when he had leather and that... but of course, you had to have the money, so until my father got a job, times were hard. I remember...through the church, St Bede's Church. We knew the priest there and he said, "Go down to the police station, that boy needs some shoes." I remember a chief inspector, Arthur Jamieson, who was in charge of the office. He gave me this certificate thing, and you

¹¹ 3rd Interview NB.

¹² Ravetz, 2001, 117.

¹³ Records of the shoeless children fund are in the town's health reports.

¹⁴ Klein, 2010, 215-219, provides more information on PACAs.

¹⁵ 1st Interview DH.

¹⁶ Reiner, 1978, 149.

had to go along to Flemming's. I remember being happy, to get a new, sturdy, strong pair of shoes, free of charge. That was a good thing they had.¹⁷ (Group B)

The 'Destitute South Shields Shoeless Children's Fund' was formally closed in April 1957.¹⁸ The *Shields Gazette* reported that the fund, founded in 1898, was one of the first PACAs in the country, and one of the last to close. The chief constable recalled that:

In the depression of the 1930s, we were supplying about 4,000 pairs of boots and stockings a year. We provided 5,070 pairs in 1936. During the 1939-45 war, we gave shoes to children who were bombed out and homeless. But our numbers have been declining.¹⁹

The amount of boots issued to children in the last five years of the fund averaged 665 pairs a year.²⁰ There was still a need to support destitute children. Whilst philanthropic, it has been argued that the true purpose of PACAs was to ensure children could attend school, find work, and thus be deviated away from crime.²¹ However, from 1957 the local education department took on the responsibility for economic neglect of children.²² Therefore constables from Group A were actively engaged in providing practical support to the poor, by means of the PACA. This was a facility unavailable to those in Group B.

The value of goods stolen in the town reflects its economy. In the period 1947-1963, the majority of crimes were valued at less than £5. Between a third and a half was valued at less than £1. In 1963, the proportion of property stolen valued at less than £5 was on the wane, at 62 per cent, whilst the percentage of property crimes valued in excess of £10 increased from 0 per cent in 1947 to 22 per cent in 1963.²³ The majority of property crimes were of lower valued items throughout the period.

¹⁷ 1st Interview AD.

¹⁸ Local Cuttings Book SS Vol 2A. 94. Dated 27 April 1957. South Shields Public Library.

¹⁹ Ibid. Dated 23 April 1957.

²⁰ Figures derived from the Annual Reports of the School Medical Officer South Shields 1951-1956. South Shields Health Reports (614.09), South Shields Local Studies Library.

²¹ Klein, 2012, 206.

²² South Shields Health Reports, 1956, 28.

²³ SSCARs, 1947-1963.

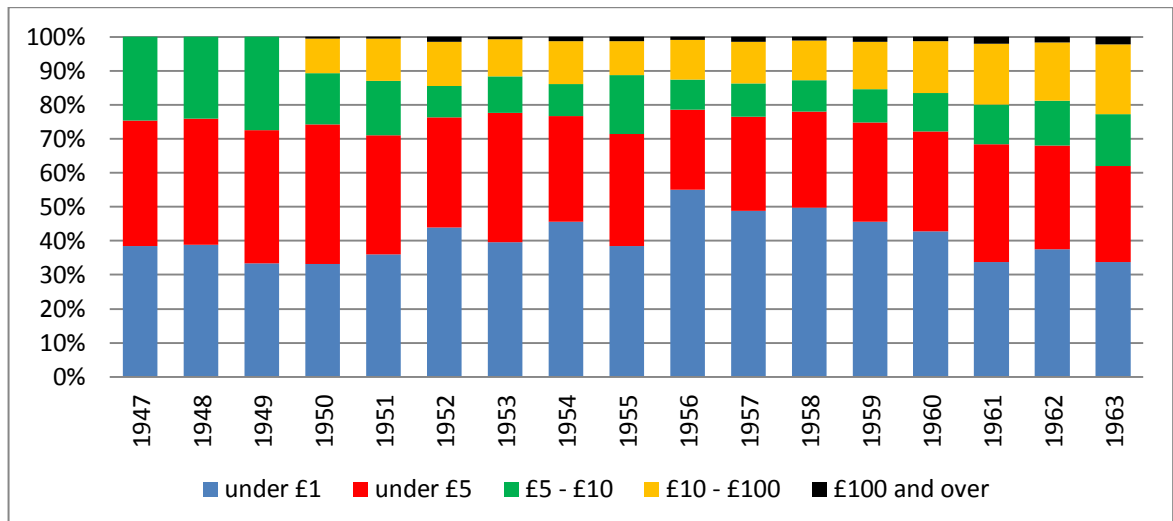


Figure 7: Property crime and associated value 1947-1963 ²⁴

Source: SSCCARs 1947-1963.

Items valued under £5 accounted for 75.4 per cent of all stolen property between 1947-1958, this decreased slightly between 1961-1963, when they accounted for 68.7 per cent. However, the insignificant value of items stolen should not be overstated; the average weekly wage of a 'skilled' shipyard worker in 1947 was £5 4s 0d and in 1967 was £12 17s 4d.²⁵ Further, retail prices had increased by 70 per cent from 1947-1963.²⁶ Even though the monetary values stolen were generally low, the human cost of such crime in an area of economic deprivation could be high. Thus £5 at the end of the period was still a significant value and £100 represented two month's wages for a 'skilled' shipyard worker.

Officers used discretion when they encountered poverty in the community. For example, it was an offence when soot accumulated in a chimney and ignited, unless the occupant could satisfy there was no neglect or carelessness on his behalf.²⁷ Constables recognised difficulties families had in paying for chimney sweeps and assisted them by suggesting appropriate answers when investigating the incident.

²⁴ Ibid. The value of stolen property was not recorded after 1963. From 1947-1949, there was no distinction of values over £5. Expensive items were included in this category until 1950 when values of £10-£100 and in excess of £100 were included.

²⁵ Department of Employment and Productivity, 44-45.

²⁶ Gazeley, 161.

²⁷ Town Police Clauses Act, 1847, SS 30, 31. Williams, 1961, 504.

The soot used to come out and set fire and all sorts. You used to have to go and see what had happened. You used to say to them, "When did you last have your chimney swept?" If it wasn't within the six months, they used to be prosecuted. "Six months was it?", "Oh yes officer, six months."²⁸ (Group A)

A narrator took a risk using his discretion when arresting a man in the mid-1950s, who had stolen some joints of meat. His action could have resulted in prosecution for aiding and abetting a crime, or assisting in the disposal of stolen goods.²⁹

There was a wall around the slaughterhouse and a bloke landed, nearly hit me coming over the wall. He'd been in there thieving. He'd a couple of legs of meat in a bag, and I grabbed him, started to walk him down towards the nick. I said, "What the hell makes you pinch things?" He says, "I'm out of work. We've got nothing to eat." He just seemed so genuine. I took him around to his house. He had a couple of kids... they had nothing...nothing. They had no food or anything. I shut the door and left it. I shouldn't have done. I'd have got the sack if they'd found out...you've got to have a conscience.³⁰ (Group A)

Significantly, the police perception of poverty changed as the more affluent times of the late 1950s and 1960s arrived. By the end of the 1960s, constables were less inclined to associate poverty with dire need, but labelled poverty to those who were unemployed or who, in their opinion, chose to be unemployed. This was a process creating a perception that a class of people were becoming 'police property'.³¹ The narrators presented evidence of stereotyping an 'underclass', associated not only with whom they were, but where they lived since older housing estates were now associated with high unemployment, deprivation, and crime (areas near Tyne Dock, Laygate and the Horsley Hill Estate). The experienced constable, working in an occupation involving processes of social isolation and depersonalisation, began to categorise the public into those deserving help, and others.³² They began to see poverty not as a social perception but as a cultural one, a side effect of a lifestyle choice. Interestingly their views seem to replicate those found in wider society.³³

²⁸ 1st Interview AJ.

²⁹ Larceny Act, 1916, s33. Williams, 1961, 171.

³⁰ 1st Interview JC.

³¹ Police property is a term used to denote a category of person controlled by the police. Reiner, 2010, 123.

³² Eugene McLaughlin. *The New Policing*. (London: Sage, 2007) 55.

³³ In 1976, a European Commission survey found that 43% of UK respondents believed poverty was caused by laziness. Obelkevich and Catterall, 122.

You didn't see so many poor people later on, didn't seem to see anyone 'needy' like they were then. People on the dole seemed fairly well off.³⁴ (Group A - reflecting on the 1960s compared to the 1950s)

The area the back of Boldon Lane, round the old 'Victoria' bottling plant, that was a scruffy hole and the majority of the people up there were 'rag tags' anyway. You never got much joy from any of them.³⁵ (Group B)

There wasn't the poverty in the late sixties as there was in the fifties. Later on if people lived badly it was because they opted to, not because they had to.³⁶ (Group B)

Poor, well I was I was born and brought up in Laygate. Not a lot of money, violent in as much that there weren't any guns or knives, just fisticuffs really. The criminal classes were quite easily identifiable by everybody.

How?

Where they lived...in many instances their names, because I found that in later years, I was arresting people whose names were still in the book from the day I joined, only they were sons and grandsons sometimes, of different families but ghettos like the Deans Estate, Ashgrove Avenue, places like that. They were easily identifiable.³⁷ (Group B)

Cases of need were still evident in the 1960s. However, narrators were unable to recall severe poverty as easily - an indicator that the overall economic quality of life had improved.

Prostitution

The police in South Shields did not perceive prostitution in the post-war period as a significant problem. The era of disorderly prostitutes posing an inconvenience in the town were confined to the years before the First World War, when the numbers of women arrested were less than 100 per year.³⁸ National reductions in the numbers of street arrests during the inter-war period were indicative of prostitutes moving away from highways, and public notice, to more secluded places.³⁹

³⁴ 1st Interview JC.

³⁵ 2nd interview GH.

³⁶ Interview MH.

³⁷ 1st Interview SB.

³⁸ For 1911-1913, they were 77, 82 and 96 respectively. SSCAR, 1911-1913.

³⁹ Stefan Anthony Slater. "Containment: Managing Street Prostitution in London, 1918-1959." Chap.11 in *Police and Policing in the Twentieth-Century.*, edited by Chris A Williams, 217-242. Farnham: Ashgate, 2011.

In South Shields, from 1947-1967, eight women were prosecuted for street prostitution. One was after 1957 indicating there were a small number of 'street' prostitutes active in the town.⁴⁰ In the post-war period prostitution operated mainly from public houses, this marked a shift from soliciting on streets (more evident in the inter-war period), to more private locations.⁴¹

It is notable that some women, and prostitutes, cohabited with Asian and Arab seafarers and received a portion of their pay whilst they were at sea.⁴² Prostitutes availed themselves of this method of gaining financial security by living with several seamen, none of whom were aware of the relationship she had with others. When they became aware, the disputes that followed led to serious assault and murders.⁴³ The most notable event of this exploitation occurred in 1951, when Tahir Ali became aware that his live-in partner, and prostitute, Evelyn McDonald had been living with his cousin Montez Ullah. Whilst Ali was at sea, McDonald decided to end her relationship with him and stay with Ullah.⁴⁴ Ali subsequently killed McDonald, stabbing her with a flick-knife. He was arrested, convicted of murder, and executed in Durham Prison on 21 March 1952.⁴⁵ He was the last man executed for an offence in South Shields.⁴⁶ This incident seems to have been one of the last recorded of women in the town obtaining money in such a way.

Tyne Dock was an established deep-sea port; its most readily identifiable import was timber from Scandinavia (used mainly for pit props).⁴⁷

Scandinavian ships were regular visitors and, during the 1950s, had an unloading turn-around of three days.⁴⁸ Their crews spent this time ashore.

⁴⁰ SSCCARs, 1947-1967.

⁴¹ Slater, 223, although this research is London based.

⁴² 1st Interview TKW.

⁴³ Most prominent of these were Nasser Abdulla, tried and executed for murder of his brother in 1919 he discovered his brother had married a woman with whom he was also having a relationship. In August 1917, a fight between Said Abdul and Ahmed Sali over a white girl resulted in a wounding. In 1923, Hassan Mohammed was executed for the murder of Jane Nagi, a woman who had married Mohammed Nagi, yet retained a relationship with both. Lawless, 175f.

⁴⁴ John Eddleston *Murderous Tyneside*, (Derby: The Derby Book Publishing Company, 2011), 178.

⁴⁵ Ibid, 182.

⁴⁶ The watch committee commended DCI Welbury for this investigation, SSCCAR, 1952. One narrator claims Tahir Ali found five notes (authorities to have pay) indicating McDonald was receiving money from various seamen. 1st Interview TKW.

⁴⁷ TIC, 1957, 33.

⁴⁸ Port of Tyne Authority. *Port of Tyne Official Handbook 1970*. (Port of Tyne Authority, 1970), 11.

There were 11 public houses within 500 feet of the main entrance to Tyne Dock.⁴⁹ Others catered for dockyards situated along the riverside eastwards towards the town centre. In 1953, there were 122 public houses and 34 registered clubs in the town, mostly in the town centre and riverside area.⁵⁰ The pubs closest to the riverside industry were the operating sphere of prostitutes. There were also a number of brothels functioning from Tyneside flats in the area. From 1947-1967, there were 26 people prosecuted for keeping brothels.⁵¹

Prostitutes had a working relationship with the police, who considered them not as offenders but part of the riverside community. They were more likely to be arrested for being drunk and disorderly than soliciting, and could be extremely violent.⁵² They marketed their trade in licensed premises and late-night refreshment houses and engaged in sex with customers in secluded places; there were many in the warren of back yards and alleyways near the riverside. They could also entertain clients in their homes.⁵³

The approach taken by constables towards prostitutes was similar to that found in Liverpool before the Second World War - prostitutes were left alone as long as they were not making a nuisance of themselves.⁵⁴ When they misbehaved, constables dealt with them using physical or verbal admonishment, rather than the criminal justice system, such as in this case in the early 1950s.

Prostitution was more common then. Loads of prostitutes around and they weren't backwards in coming forwards. One was L****. She was in her 30s; she was a sex maniac. One Saturday afternoon I was in the market, and a man said, "You want to get down to Kelly's doorway on the ferry. There's something going on down there." I goes down there, and there's L**** with breasts hanging out and a man hanging on one of them. "What you doing L****?" "I didn't want it. I'm giving him it because he wants it". I just chased her, no arrest for lewdness like you would nowadays, just kick her up the behind and chase her.⁵⁵ (Group A)

⁴⁹ Ordinance Survey Map 1942, Durham, Sheet 12. South Shields Local Studies Library.

⁵⁰ SSCCARs, 1947-1967.

⁵¹ SSCCARs, 1947-1967. Of the 26 offences, 13 were recorded between 1949-1951.

⁵² Jackson, 2006, 182. Confirms this was a common way of dealing with prostitutes.

⁵³ Three of the soliciting offences were pre 1957 when the law required there was an element of annoyance caused to the public by soliciting.

⁵⁴ Klein, 2010, 245.

⁵⁵ 1st Interview DH.

The public were not particularly concerned with street prostitution. However, brothels were reported by them and investigated. There seems to have been a lack of consideration of privacy when women took their customers to their homes. A constable recalls how in the 1950s he observed the method of contraception used by a particular prostitute:

There was a brothel they were all over the town in the 50s. I remember a dreadful flat, curtains all drawn back and standing outside, just watching. This woman stood up. The man is sitting on a chair. She pulled yards of bandage out of her vagina and I thought, 'What the hell is that?' I was a bit green then, I didn't know what that was. I was told it was her contraceptive, she'd soaked it in 'Dettol', pushed it into her vagina, bash on regardless, and pull it all out. You see, she didn't want to be pregnant. I remember watching that. Things like that, you never forget them.⁵⁶
(Group A)

Prostitutes were a source of information and support to constables. There are instances where they called for assistance on behalf of constables in violent confrontations. They were particularly helpful to policewomen during investigations about missing girls.⁵⁷ They fostered good relationships by purchasing beer for some beat constables; actions reasonably assumed to offer them some police protection in the event of engaging with difficult customers. While constables knew the prostitutes, there are no records of any 'inappropriate' liaisons between them.⁵⁸

The Wolfenden Report, published in 1957, investigated social and criminal aspects of homosexuality and prostitution.⁵⁹ Its main concern was the issue of street prostitution in London. It highlighted 6,829 prosecutions in the West End of London in 1953 for street prostitution.⁶⁰ However, there were only 10,269 similar prosecutions in total, for England and Wales, thus the West End of London accounted for 66.5 per cent of all prosecutions.⁶¹ The report, which lacked any real enquiry in the provinces, made constant references to

⁵⁶ 2nd Interview DH. McLaren describes methods using cotton wool dipped in vinegar. Angus McLaren. *Twentieth-Century Sexuality: A History*. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), 84. By the 1950s technical methods of contraception were the principal regulator of population. Obelkevich and Catterall, 10.

⁵⁷ Jackson suggests assistance was given to minimise competition from younger females. Jackson, 2006, 181.

⁵⁸ This may be a taboo subject well hidden, sensitive to the image of the force and individuals.

⁵⁹ The government commissioned a report on homosexuality and prostitution chaired by Sir John Wolfenden. Home Office. *Report of the Committee on Homosexual Offences and Prostitution*. (London: HMSO, 1957).

⁶⁰ Ibid, 81.

⁶¹ Ibid, 143.

the personal characteristics of prostitutes as being psychologically inclined towards prostitution and generally rejected economic conditions as a major causation.⁶² Mental deficiency associated with sexual conduct was a widely held view. It was estimated over 12 per cent of prostitutes were 'dull' and 'backward'.⁶³

However, the constables in South Shields saw prostitutes of the 1950s as being on the margins of poverty, suffering from addiction to alcohol, or an inappropriate lifestyle and labelled them 'amateur prostitutes'. The recommendations of the Wolfenden Report led to changes in legislation making it easier to prosecute street soliciting; one of the concerns expressed in the report when proposing this action was that it would lead to a reduction in information passed to the police by prostitutes.⁶⁴

Some policewomen formed close relationships with prostitutes, making a point of calling at their homes whilst engaging in 'easing' activities to enquire of their welfare; and establish confidential sources of information.

I remember one in particular. She had two children. When I was out walking the town I used to pop into her house. I was very fond of her little son, Tommy. He was about five or six, I always used to give him a half a crown, and his little face used to light up. I suppose half a crown was quite a lot of money for a kid. Things like that you remember. I wonder what Tommy ever made of himself.⁶⁵ (Group A)

There was a shift in the behaviour of prostitutes in the 1960s. They were less obvious in the Tyne Dock area, were younger and more associated with poorer quality nightclubs emerging in the late 1960s and early 1970s. There were less local women and more were travelling into the town from Sunderland or Newcastle. The reasons for such a shift can be associated with the demolition of pubs and houses surrounding the immediate area of Tyne Dock, as part of the rehousing scheme of the early 1960s. This removed the normal resort of the prostitutes who were generally mature women coming to the end of their prostitute career. Further, technical improvements made in the port during 1960, meant many timber carrying

⁶² Ibid, para 2.

⁶³ Peirson, 78-79.

⁶⁴ Home Office, 1957a, para 287.

⁶⁵ Interview JW.

ships could be unloaded in one day rather than three, reducing the availability of Scandinavian customers.⁶⁶ The number of arrests of non-residents for drunkenness, usually a measure of seamen arrested, decreased as the port modernised (an indication of the reduction in the time seamen spent in the town). In 1950, 50 per cent of drunkenness arrests were of non-residents to the town. By 1967 this had decreased to 19 per cent (see Figure 8).⁶⁷ In addition, as the local prostitutes aged fewer local younger women replaced them, which was in keeping with improved economic conditions.

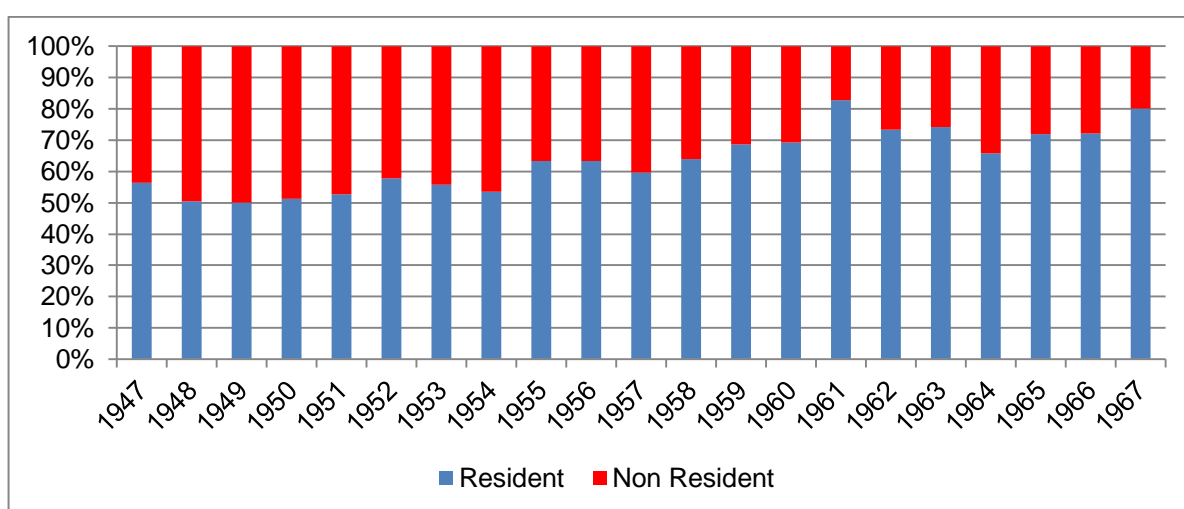


Figure 8: Residents and non-residents arrested for drunkenness 1947-1967

Source: SSCARs 1947-1967.

The loss of traditional back-to-back streets and public houses led prostitutes to smuggle themselves into Tyne Dock to gain access to ships, causing some reaction by The River Tyne Police:

You'd have trouble on ships where women were going on board. Taxi drivers used to put them in the boot and try and get them through the dock, so the gatemen wouldn't know they were there. Certain ships we had arrangements with, so if the captain didn't want them on board you could arrest them and take them to court. But if there was no reciprocal arrangements, with the country that the ship was registered in, you couldn't do it.⁶⁸ (Group B)

⁶⁶ Port of Tyne Authority, 1970, 11.

⁶⁷ South Shields became popular as a night time leisure venue from 1961, when the first North East nightclub opened. Thus, while there were less foreigners arrested there was greater likelihood that arrests would be made of regional revellers from out of town.

⁶⁸ 1st Interview CA.

Whilst brothels had been located in areas close to the riverside, by the 1960s as a result of the rebuilding programme, they could be sited in any part of the town. When complaints were made of disorderly houses (brothels) constables from the plain-clothes section would keep observations to determine the frequency of use, leading to a raid on the premises.⁶⁹ This account is from the late 1960s.

We had a plain-clothes section and disorderly houses were a thing then. A house being used by a couple of females, and a continual group of men would come for the usual. Reports of these would come in and the inspector would set up observations. I was watching the back of Frederick Street where this character was running this house with this fat old woman. The inspector was as keen as mustard on disorderly houses. We took one of these cases to court. We had a big sheet of cardboard, and I had all these used French letters pinned on as an exhibit [laughs].

Did you take it into court?

Yeah, it was frowned upon but...they were just going in, having their way, and chucking them in the fireplace. But the fire wasn't on, and when we raided it we got all these and the inspector said, "That's all evidence." It was a regular thing watching disorderly houses.⁷⁰ (Group B)

The low number of prosecutions for managing brothels, against the amount of cases narrators claim were investigated suggests that many inquiries resulted in tenants being warned and dissuaded from their activities, possibly due to a lack of evidence.

Suicide

Changes to the urban landscape, and industrial modernisation, assisted in the detraditionalisation of prostitution. However, other social issues dealt with by the police completely disappeared in the modernisation process. An example is the use of town coal gas as a means of suicide. Criminologists and crime prevention specialists have an interest in coal gas suicide as the introduction of natural gas in the late 1960s led to a reduction in the overall suicide rates. Those who had contemplated suicide by gassing did not seek other methods of ending their life when natural gas was installed.⁷¹

⁶⁹ The plain-clothes section consisted of uniformed constables temporarily seconded from shifts into a small unit to deal with beat complaints.

⁷⁰ 2nd Interview GH.

⁷¹ Robert Reiner. *Law and Order*. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007), 86. Cites town gas suicides as an example of how social and economic change can intervene as a preventive measure.

The national decline in town gas suicides was due to the reduction of toxins in the production of the gas in the 1950s and 1960s, and its eventual replacement with less toxic natural gas.⁷² The peak for gas suicides was 1958 and overall rates began to decline from the late 1950s. The certainty of death by gassing was dependant on the rate of absorption of carbon monoxide into the blood stream, influenced by the size of the room and method used, (gas ovens made the process easier).⁷³ The police practice of destroying animals by gassing would also have been affected during this period; the gas was less toxic and it is hardly surprising that constables had to put 'a lot' of gas into the chamber to kill the animals.⁷⁴

From 1947-1963, there were 96 suicides by coal gas in South Shields.⁷⁵ Dealing with coal gas deaths was an experience that officers joining the police after 1970 were not to encounter, yet they were unique as described by these narrators:

It was the same every time, the door of the gas oven was open they were lying inside with the full blast of the gas. It made them unconscious but they always used to vomit and they were dead as a door nail, and it was the same smell every time you went, their clothes everything. They had the gas smell and the vomit smell... a unique smell. That was most common.⁷⁶ (Group A)

A very heavy sweet smell; unlike today's gas. When you smell coal gas it's very sweet and sickly, very pungent, you knew as soon as you walked into a room that someone had left the gas. It meant that the body wouldn't be marked, wouldn't be disfigured in any way. Which, if you were a woman might be something you would prefer to do.⁷⁷ (Group A)

In recalling these events the narrators' memory focussed upon the senses, particularly the smell of the vomit and the coal gas permeating into the victims clothes.

⁷² Kyla Thomas and David Gunnell. "Suicide in England and Wales 1861-2007: a time trend analysis." *International Journal of Epidemiology* 39 (April 2010): 1464-1475.

⁷³ Ronald Clarke and Patricia Mayhew. "The British Gas Suicide Story and its Criminological Implications." *Crime and Justice* 10 (1988): 79-116.

⁷⁴ See p119, where a constable describes having to use a lot of gas to kill dogs.

⁷⁵ SSCARs, 1947-1960 and South Shields Health Reports 1960-1963. These figures do not include deaths by misadventure, accidental deaths or attempt suicides. Figures were not categorised after 1963.

⁷⁶ 2nd Interview WT.

⁷⁷ 3rd Interview BA.

Discretion and informal justice

Policing is a secretive affair; many activities carried out by constables on patrol are out of view of the public and not under direct supervision.

There is an imbalance in discretion in that if the officer carries out a prosecution or utilises a police power this can then be ratified by the criminal justice process, however, if the officer opts not to use such power, then it is ended, no one other than the officer and the member of the public need be aware.⁷⁸

Constables, in serving the town, had to decide how to deal with a variety of incidents encountered; discretion is a tool in the constable's decision-making armoury. This section explores factors that influenced decision-making in the application of discretion. One decisive factor was the social impact the action would have on the community. Constables were aware of the repercussions of police action that placed individuals into the criminal justice system and often sought to apply pragmatic solutions rather than a strict application of law. Poverty, the concerns of the community, and the risk of violence were considerations. A constable's poor decision that left a negative impact on a community could affect his (and colleagues) working environment. He would have to work in that neighbourhood and live with the consequences.

Most offenders, particularly in the 1950s, complied with the instructions of the police. This allowed prisoners to walk to police boxes to await transport, such as described in this arrest in the mid-1950s.

In the back lane of John Clay Street here's this man obviously taking betting slips. I cycled up to him and said, "If you take my advice you'll bugger off". "Yeah, thank you", he says and off I toddled. I went down to Westoe Bridges where the box was, locked the cycle up and had a walk back up John Clay Street. Here he is on the same back lane doing the same thing again, so I arrested him. I think this will show you the different conditions of then and now. I said to him, "You walk in front of me, and keep your hands out of your pockets" and I walked a couple of steps behind him and he walked down to the box at Westoe and I rang in for the van and took him in.⁷⁹
(Group A)

If there was a need to arrest a violent prisoner, the distance to the nearest telephone to obtain assistance (be it a public telephone or police box/pillar) was deliberated. One reason the force recruited tall well-made men was to ensure they could overcome those who were violent as they were expected

⁷⁸ Edwards, 23.

⁷⁹ 1st Interview RC.

to fight their way out of difficulty.⁸⁰ If circumstances allowed, constables would call the police station requesting assistance prior to engaging in a violent scenario. When in a dangerous position, he was often reliant upon a member of the public physically assisting him, or telephoning the police station on his behalf. It was rare for the public to refuse to help.

Discretion extended to taking drunken men home and depositing them with their wives.⁸¹ This was one way in which to avoid having to appear at court the following morning to give evidence of arrest; a requirement and inconvenience to a constable on nightshift.

I've often physically stood them up, got them across my shoulder, taken them home, brayed on the door 'til the wife came down, and just dumped them in the hall. It's far worse for them than going to court; their wives used to create hell with them. It's easier, didn't go to court the first thing next morning, which you used to. If you came off nightshift, you had to be at court at ten o'clock the next morning. I used to think that often there are more ways of killing the cat than throttling it.⁸² (Group B)

Young argues that arrests of drunks on nightshift was beneficial to constables gaining time off for overtime in attending court at Newcastle City Police; there is no evidence of such a system at South Shields.⁸³ Constables in South Shields left duty early on nightshift to attend court the following morning. However, due to the quick-change system, requiring officers to return to work at 2pm following the end of nightshift, there was little benefit to constables in arresting drunks.

A constable, who joined in the mid-1960s, described the process of considering the use of discretion.

To break it down to basics, it depended on the action you were going to take, how near to the box you were, how near to summoning help if it all went pear shape, the attitude, the size, everything about the protagonist. Could you handle it, if it got to an arrest situation?⁸⁴ (Group B)

⁸⁰ Clive Emsley *Crime and Society in Twentieth-Century England* (Harlow: Longman, 2011), 159.

⁸¹ Banton, 140. Found officers to have taken drunks home.

⁸² 1st Interview PL.

⁸³ The economy of arrests. Young, 311.

⁸⁴ 1st Interview AB.

Constables applied discretion with judgement and pragmatism; partly because it is impossible to always apply the law and to preserve the unique relationship he held in the area he worked.⁸⁵

Some police would walk past (groups of youths) and ignore them. I didn't I used to tell them what was what. It was very much a discretionary thing though, because you rarely arrested people for things like that; it was advice, which I think, is a great way of policing, if you are good at it. But the worst thing you can do is ignore it.

How much discretion did you have when you were working the beat?

Total; nobody knew what you did.⁸⁶ (Group B)

Police officers also delivered informal justice by assaulting the offender or by the application of less violent methods, such as this incident from the 1950s.

Rather than lock somebody up we'd put him in the vehicle take him up to the Grotto (isolated pub on the coast two miles from the town centre) take their shoes off and say, "Right, your shoes are on the New Crown Hotel wall, bloody well walk down". That was a good two-mile walk, and it used to take all the steam out of their ardour; they never complained. It saved having to go to court, mind, if it was somebody we knew, who was a 'worky ticket', in they would go.⁸⁷ (Group A)

When parents addressed the behaviour of children they often inflicted physical punishment. This was a time when corporal punishment was an established convention in schools. There was a general unofficial acknowledgement that it was legitimate for a constable to use physical violence against offending youngsters.⁸⁸ The approach of a parent towards a daughter found in a public house, depicted below, gives an example of parental 'discipline'. However, there is a sense of naivety, towards the possibility of child abuse as a cause for the girl to be constantly away from home.

I was walking through the Adam and Eve [pub] this day, and I saw her sitting there, on her own, and it was a place frequented by Arabs. I thought 'she shouldn't be in here'. I said, "Right out", and I marched her all the way home to her house, knocked on her door, and said to her father, "I found her drinking orange juice in the Adam and Eve" [makes a slapping movement], "What!", he slapped her across the face, "In the house". So the following week, I went in again, sitting there, "Out, come on", marched her home again, did the same, father smacks her across the cheeks. She got the message. I never saw her in there again. The father's reaction...so much different from the father of today.⁸⁹ (Group A)

⁸⁵ PAJ Waddington and Martin Wright. *What is Policing?* (Exeter: Learning Matters, 2010) 49-52.

⁸⁶ 1st Interview SB.

⁸⁷ 1st Interview FD.

⁸⁸ It was not until 1987 that corporal punishment was barred in state schools. Clive Emsley *The English and Violence Since 1750*. (London: Hambledon, 2005) 167.

⁸⁹ Interview JW.

Whilst the period saw the 'invention' of the teenager, children were still subject to authoritarian standards of conduct by the police. A lack of deference was not evident, to most constables, until the latter part of the 1960s and 1970s.⁹⁰ Corporal punishment administered as a criminal justice sentence, was still within the memories of police constables who worked in the post-war period, the last juvenile birched was in 1926.⁹¹ The last person sentenced to whipping in South Shields was in 1937.⁹² The legal qualification of *doli incapax* (unable to perform evil) meant a child over the age of eight was responsible for their actions, and subject to the criminal justice system. In 1969, this changed when the age of criminal responsibility increased to ten. If the offender is aged between ten and 14 years there is a requirement to prove they knew what they were doing was 'wrong'.⁹³ These were symptoms of wider changes taking place in the criminal justice system and the provision of education and welfare to the young. The 1960s had seen a growth in research, training and education in subjects such as sociology and criminology. This led to a requirement for those involved in working with the young to be educated in, and be aware of, these disciplines.⁹⁴

The constables perceived that they were the authority on the street and could impose their judgement. On occasions, this was with the full consent of the parent such as in this instance in the late 1960s.

He was a right tear away. He was always in your face, always acting himself. So, one day I took him home. The lads had been locking him up for trivial things, just to get him off the streets. I took him home to see his dad, he was a single parent, I said, "Now look, are you going to deal with this or will I?" He says, "I'll deal with it on this occasion, if you see him doing anything wrong in the future, you've got my permission to give him a dig, just do it and get it dealt with at the time". You can rest assured that this lad got a few digs, off me. Round a back lane, in a corner and he got a hiding – he got a – he didn't get a hiding, he got a dig. He preferred that to being prosecuted, it was just common sense really.

How old was he?

⁹⁰ The term 'teenager' was widely introduced in the 1950s. Donnelly, 2005, 23. Osgerby suggests it was first used by social scientists in the USA in 1941. Osgerby, 2004, 20.

⁹¹ He received three strokes. This was witnessed by Renton-Gordon. Renton-Gordon, 7.

⁹² SSCAR, 1937. The Criminal Justice Act 1948, removed corporal punishment as a sentence. Mair and Burke, 83. It remained on the statutes for convicts until 1967. Emsley, 2011, 204.

⁹³ The age of criminal responsibility was amended by The Children and Young Persons Act 1969. John Muncie *Youth and Crime* 3rd edition (London: Sage, 2009) 277.

⁹⁴ Wills, 2005, 180.

He was about 15, big enough, and strong enough to act himself with cops if he wanted.⁹⁵ Once you got hold of him, and took him around the back lane and told him, "Remember what your dad said" and he got it he respected that, rather than getting dragged down to the nick and his dad having to come down.⁹⁶ (Group B)

One constable would hit children over the head if they were misbehaving. He recalled an incident, which occurred in the late 1950s when his actions were supported by the deputy chief constable.

You put hazelnuts, in your white gloves and carry them in your hand. Anybody was obstreperous you hit them with your gloves. "I only hit them with gloves, sir." They had these five hazelnuts in the fingertips, just belt them around here [indicates cheek] round the face you see, and, 'you only hit me with a glove' and that was it, no questions. We carried a lot of power and dignity in ourselves, ex-servicemen, you were listened to. We would come down King Street all powerful. There was nothing to giving them a clip around the ear hole.

Towards the end of my time in uniform, I was around Middle Docks, and there were four or five lads there teenagers, they were F'ing and blinding, and so I checked them on their language. They told me to F off. I said, "Don't you swear at me" so I clipped him one. "I'll tell my Da." I said, "I'll come and see your father." Up 'til then you always got support from the parents. I went and saw his father, and I said, "I've clipped your son for foul language to me" he says, "Did you hit him?" I says, "Yes." "I'm reporting you to your chief constable."

Anyway, come on duty, "Grey wants to see you." I thought, 'what have I done now?' I saw him, he said, "I had the man and his son down about you hitting him, I asked where the officer hit him. He said, on the face. Show me, there's no marks on his face, no, I can't accept that. Your son must have been upset at the policeman telling him off, and he's telling a story." That was the end of it. That was the start of the public retaliating against the police for hitting them.⁹⁷ (Group A)

The deferential approach to police officers who issued informal justice changed to one where police were accused rather than supported. Reasons offered by narrators for the transformation included references to the 'Thurso Boy' incident; a change in standards of authority instigated in schools; and a more permissive society.⁹⁸ Whilst the youth of the town engaged in the fashions and musical culture prevalent at the time, including the fads of 'Teddy Boys' and 'Mods and Rockers', they did not create any serious disorder problems. The moral panic surrounding the 'Mods and Rockers' was seen as an issue for the south of the country. However, there were cases of youth disorder emerging in the suburbs in the mid to late 1960s dealt with by detailing larger constables to the area with a remit to 'take no

⁹⁵ Scientific evidence indicates that due to higher standards of living children were maturing at a much earlier age. This may have contributed to ideas of youngsters being 'different' to those of previous generations. Osgerby, 1988, 18.

⁹⁶ 2nd Interview ER.

⁹⁷ 1st Interview DH.

⁹⁸ The Thurso Boy incident relates to an accusation of police assault in 1957. Critchley, 270.

nonsense'.⁹⁹ Similar approaches to youth disorder were used in other forces, including Oxford who allocated members of their rugby team to deal with disturbances.¹⁰⁰ When addressing youth disorder the police considered it legitimate to 'enforce' the law by 'imposing authority' and applying a zero tolerance approach.

Changes in the deference afforded to the police were recognised, and considered more obvious in the 1970s.

The public was changing as well; their attitude towards you was changing. There was probably more respect in my earlier days than in the latter days. This was noticeable when you had to deal with youngsters causing disorder, you would ask for a name and address, and they would say, 'Well my teacher says I don't have to give you my name and address'. You found that was an attitude that was coming into it. That wouldn't have been tolerated by older policemen they would have jumped on that very, very much. It made life harder to work. It was easier to get people to do things in the earlier part of my service than it was in later part. They were less willing to question.¹⁰¹ (Group A)

I would say from the early 70s, it began to get less respectful for the police. Parents didn't seem to be bothered about controlling their kids, used to let them do what they like. If you dealt with them, in anything other than the correct manner, the parents couldn't wait to get down to complain about you. Of course, the kids knew that. I can remember kids saying to me, "You can't do anything about what I'm doing, because I'm below the age of criminal responsibility." I thought, where has that come from, he was right, but where had they gotten it from? "I'm below the age of criminal responsibility."¹⁰² (Group B)

Constables recognised older serving officers were less inclined to accept the less deferential attitudes of the public. Whilst informal justice was a practical answer to some incidents, narrators made few references to assaults on prisoners. The occupational culture in South Shields relating to violence against offenders can be categorised into two levels. First, the accepted use of informal justice, addressing violent actions of offenders with equal violence, was legitimate. Second, where the amount of force delivered by a constable exceeded that required to accomplish a task, it was deemed unacceptable. Individual constables determined the amount of force used. However, those using excessive violence would gain a reputation in the community that would soon permeate into the police.

⁹⁹ Several narrators recall specific areas being targeted and offenders arrested for Breach of the Peace with little leniency given.

¹⁰⁰ Rose, 15.

¹⁰¹ 2nd Interview BA.

¹⁰² 1st Interview PL.

He pulled his stick out and he was going to lay about him and hit him with his stick and I says, "Put it away, put it away". So, he didn't use it but he was he was going to lambast this lad with his peg. We had no time for that. I do know that sometimes they have to but I never hit the situation where I was pushed into a corner.¹⁰³ (Group A)

Many narrators expressed an opinion that the criminal fraternity respected fairness; including the use of force. Constables saw this ethical issue as being intrinsic to gaining respect from the community, and their peers, and viewed this in contrast to what they witnessed in other local forces that had reputations of being violent. One recalled his experience, following the arrest of a man living in another force area, of actions he observed, and allowed, at another force's police station, prior to transferring his prisoner to South Shields. The incident is an example of how the 'blue code of silence' was, albeit reluctantly, extended to police officers outside the borough.

We went to ***** police station at nine o'clock at night when the crime squad were coming off duty. They were mainly Newcastle detectives. It ended up they took our prisoner off us, stripped him bollock naked. One of them had a ruler with a steel strip in, and he was hitting his penis with this thing. Another one, who later became a detective superintendent, put his watch on the floor and smashed it. He beat him with this ruler across his back and we couldn't...well we could, I mean...I look back on it now, and I think I should have acted differently, but I didn't. Eventually, we got him out, he coughed the job, took him to the police station. I said, "What did you think about that?" He said, "That wasn't on. I know I've done a lot, but that wasn't on". I said, "What are you going to do about it?" He said, "If I do anything about it you're in the clag". I said, "Well, you're right there." "Aye, forget about it." I took him down charged him. He was remanded in custody to Durham (prison) and all those wounds would have been documented there. He never said anything...for a good year I worried myself about that, and that was ***** police. That wasn't just an isolated incident, they were bullies. They assaulted people and bullied people.

What makes it difficult for policemen to address such issues?

What made it difficult for me was my lack of strength of character. As time went by, I would have dealt with that differently. I was a young PC, they were all – I mean one of them later became my detective superintendent. He run with it as well mind. They were all senior to me, and they were...don't rock the boat. So, my answer to that was, never go back to ***** with a prisoner, that was my answer to it. It wasn't a...put a statement in which I should have done. I don't think I'm a weak character, but I was on that occasion I should have dealt with that.¹⁰⁴ (Group B)

Whilst constables in the town did not condone such behaviour, violence deemed 'necessary', or deserved, was. Should an offender offer violence to a constable then retribution was expected. Constables relied on the authority the uniform afforded, if necessary through the medium of violence.

¹⁰³ 1st Interview JH.

¹⁰⁴ Interview BO.

You had to use violence to quell violence in those days.¹⁰⁵ (Group B)

There was this group of men, there was about 11 or 12 men, they were arguing, and they were going to start a fight at the Nook. We went across and told them to go, one stood and argued, and we locked him up. We went across to the police box put him in the box, and he swung a punch at A*** and it hit him on the shoulder, and his fist went through the glass of the police box. He turned, and picked a piece of glass up and A*** just got hold of his hand like that (forcing the prisoner's hand on the glass he held) and squeezed. The blood was squirting, and the bloke was squealing like a stuffed pig. I was standing over him, I was feeling a bit squeamish when I saw this.¹⁰⁶ (Group A)

It was, very seldom there were any complaints, there was no people being thrashed or anything like that you know, not really violently done to; but there was a degree of enforcement.¹⁰⁷ (Group A)

Occasionally the public relished the thought of fighting the police, who were seen as 'fair game'. However, some constables were also up for a fight.

All a sudden, I hears a voice, "Ho, yea" and I see a fellow, big lad six foot odd, 18 stone, they were terrified of him. "I want to see you." I walks over, I said, "What's your problem?" He said, "You're my problem." I said, "Get yourself home." He said, "Do you fancy a fight?" I said, "Get round the corner, get back of the fish shop."

I used my fists and I knocked him all over, the back of the fish shop. I says, "Now, get yourself home." This is a Saturday night. Apparently, the next day, Sunday dinnertime he walks in the pub. He had congealed blood around his eyes his mouth was out here, bust lips.¹⁰⁸ (Group B)

Conclusion

Social changes in South Shields were perceptible to the constable who joined the police in the immediate post-war period. The town consistently had unemployment rates well above the national level and constables encountered poverty on a regular basis. There were generational differences between the two groups of narrators; the older serving constables' personal experience of poverty reflect the economy of 'their' time, and as the country became more affluent police involvement, when working with impoverished families, changed. Assisting the poor had been an official function of the police through the PACA. However, from 1957, the police no longer issued shoes to destitute children, and following the demolition of large swathes of old housing, it was less common to experience the deprivation brought about by many slums and poor housing conditions. These constables recalled with

¹⁰⁵ 1st Interview GT.

¹⁰⁶ 2nd Interview JC.

¹⁰⁷ 1st Interview TKW.

¹⁰⁸ 1st Interview TP. He was a boxing champion.

compassion the way they connected with the poor and ensured leniency was shown, when possible.

The constables' perception of poverty had changed by the late 1960s; they were now more likely to connect poverty with the lifestyle of the individual, rather than the financial circumstances in which they survived. It was not simply the character of poverty that changed but the public's attitude towards it; this is reflected in responses provided by the narrators and in keeping with the time. The police were revealing a detraditionalised social attitude found in wider society. Those constables who had joined in the immediate post-war era supported this notion, as they compared the obvious poverty and hardship of the late 1940s with the better social conditions of the 1960s. However, the sixties were still bearers of poverty; the weak economy of the town was reflected in the value of property stolen; a third of all property crime from 1947-1963 was valued at less than £1.

The post-war rehabilitation of the town was apparent. Traditional Tyneside flats, schools and public buildings were slowly replaced with modern semi-detached houses, and steel and concrete façades. The character of the riverside area changed leading to the virtual disappearance of the local 'amateur' prostitute. Younger women who travelled into the town, and operated from new nightclubs emerging in the 1960s superseded them. As the riverside prostitute diminished so too did the relationship she held with the constable. Changes in the urban landscape and socio-economic improvements led to the detraditionalisation of prostitution. Similarly, methods of committing suicide altered with the demise of carbon monoxide in coal gas use, and its eventual replacement by natural gas. The experience of constables interacting with these social issues was unique and not replicated in future police experience.

Constables used discretion widely and in a pragmatic way. They made decisions based on the likelihood of danger to themselves and others, as well as the impact their action would have on their working environment and the community. They used practical approaches to resolving common issues and physical force to deliver informal justice to impose their authority;

(perceived by them as acceptable by most of the community). However, by the 1960s, there was evidence that the public were opposing such methods of enforcing authority. Younger officers accepted this more easily, whilst their older serving peers struggled to come to terms with what they saw as a dilution of status and authority. The unofficial police code of conduct accepted the use of violence to control certain situations and to ensure good public order. Nonetheless, there was still a recognition, and distaste, of 'unwarranted' excessive police violence, be it against criminals or not. However, when such behaviour was witnessed, the 'blue cloak of silence' was likely to descend, and victims unlikely to receive much succour.

Changes to the town through the modernisation process illustrate that the detraditionalisation of police experience linked to developments in society was not solely dependent on police policy changes, or the introduction of new police systems. The way society changed was an obvious influencing factor in transforming the police.

Chapter 7: Changes in communication, technology, and beat patrol

The conversion of the basic systems of urban policing over so much of the country probably represents the biggest change in fundamental police operational methods since 1829.¹

When HMIC Sir Eric St Johnston commented on the swift modernisation process that affected the policing of England and Wales in 1967, he highlighted changes with the operational use of technology, mobility, and management systems. The changes were distinctly applicable to the 1960s. This chapter will outline the national change process that detraditionalised policing methods, which had altered little since the introduction of the police signal box in the late 1920s. The police became a more technically aware and forward-looking service that, within the space of a decade, would move from traditional foot patrol systems to a reliance on mobility and wireless communication. It will argue that not all uniformed constables initially welcomed the changes, in particular the introduction of the personal radio, and that much of the new technology increased the police workload, rather than reduce it.

The requirement for change

There was an exponential increase in incidents reported to the police in South Shields from 1947-1968, most evident after 1956. While the recruiting system in South Shields meant there were always enough men and women applying for police posts, the 'authorised establishment', imposed by the Home Office, restricted the amount of police officers financed by central government.² The difference between the rate of increase in the authorised police establishment and the growth of incidents requiring a police response created a 'demand gap', placing the police under operational pressure.³ This was particularly noticeable from the 1970s to the mid-2000s; however it was evident, albeit on a lesser scale, in South Shields from 1947-1967(see Figure 9).

¹ HMICAR, 1967.

² Authorised establishments were published in HMICARs and SSCARs.

³ Jerry Ratcliffe, *Intelligence-Led Policing* (Oxford: Routledge, 2008) 19.

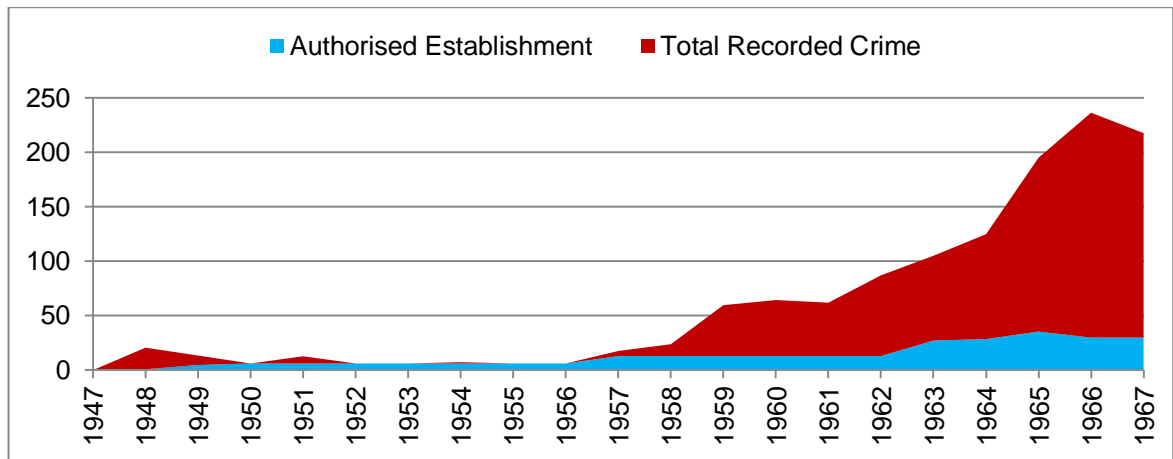


Figure 9: Percentage increase in police authorised establishment and total recorded crime in South Shields 1947-1967, illustrating the 'demand gap'

Source: SSCCARs 1947-1967 and HMICAR, 1947-1967

The expansion of the town's housing estates led to policing a greater street mileage (from 128 miles in 1947 to 172.5 miles in 1967), and an increase in routine duties by patrolling officers influenced escalations in reported incidents from 1947-1967.⁴ These changes intensified a demand placed on limited resources. It is difficult to assess the total amount of incidents dealt with in South Shields during this period, as much police data is restricted. However, a comparison of the combined recorded crimes and beat complaints of 1947, with those of 1966, reveals that the force dealt with 7.03 incidents in an average day in 1947, increasing to 19.97 in 1966 - a rise of 184 per cent.⁵

Beat complaints, offences recorded and investigated as issues of anti-social behaviour that fell outside of the definition of recorded crime, began to rise from 1956 (see Figure 10). They are a good measure of low-level disorder reported to the police and were recorded in six categories: damage; nuisance; trespass; dangerous dogs; annoyance; and miscellaneous.⁶

⁴ The mileage of streets was an indicator published in the SSCCARs.

⁵ Beat complaint data was not published in SSCCAR in 1967.

⁶ SSCCARs 1947-1967.

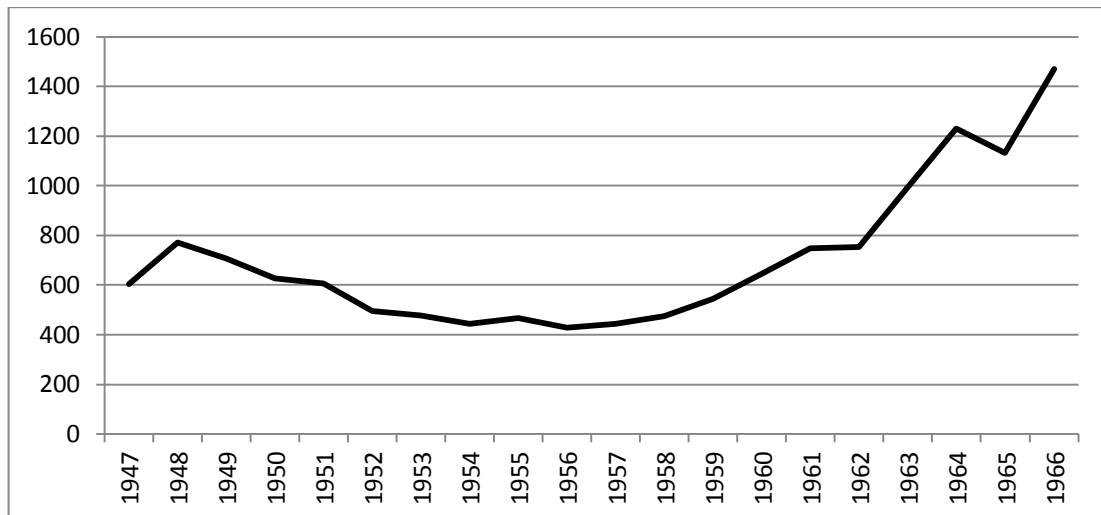


Figure 10: Beat complaints 1947-1966

Source: SSCCARs 1947-1966.

The centralised system of 999 emergency telephone calls introduced in London in 1936, was ‘rolled out’ nationally from 1937.⁷ South Shields borough police accepted all 999 calls and co-ordinated the dispatch of other emergency services including the fire brigade and ambulance.⁸ HMIC suggested in 1948 that forces should have ‘information rooms’ in order to act as a distribution point for incoming calls.⁹ South Shields allocated a communications officer from each shift relief to monitor and control communications.¹⁰ The national uptake of the 999 system was slow with Glasgow being the first city to use the system outside of London in 1938. HMIC reported in 1951, “The number of Post Office exchange areas with the 999 facility for calling emergency services has again increased.”¹¹ Its introduction facilitated an improved method of communicating emergencies to the police (the public had always been able to use police boxes and pillars for this purpose). However, the number of 999 calls made (see Figure 11) gives an indication of additional incidents created requiring swift responses;

⁷ Bunker, 1988, 203.

⁸ The number of calls was recorded in the SSCCARs.

⁹ HMICAR, 1948.

¹⁰ SSCCAR, 1949.

¹¹ HMICAR, 1951.

one unable to be met by foot patrolling officers who were in limited contact with their headquarters.¹²

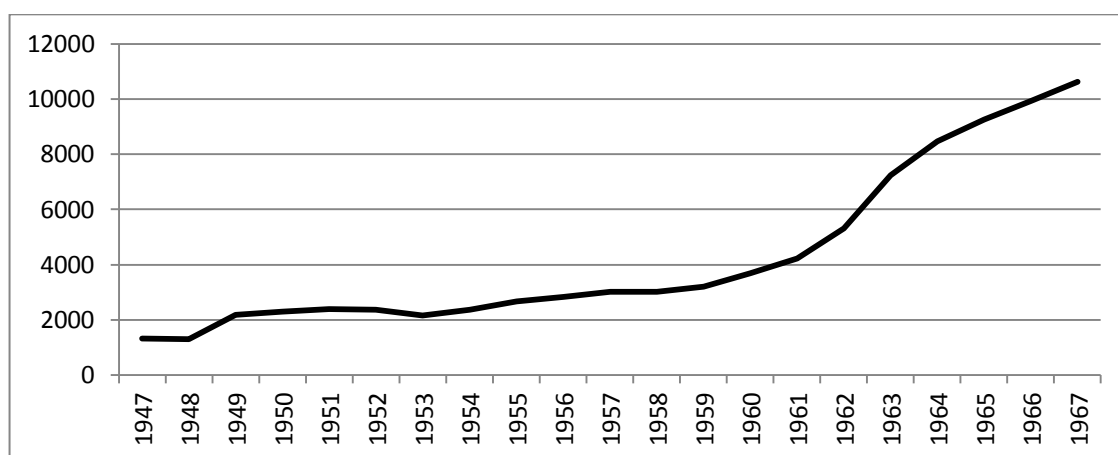


Figure 11: Emergency calls made to South Shields Borough Police Force 1947-1967

Source: SSCCARs 1947-1967.

There had also been an increase in the use of motor vehicles, fuelling a requirement to police increased traffic and associated offences which further added to the demands made on the constable. However, in South Shields beat constables dealt with road accidents only to the extent of awaiting the arrival of traffic officers (unless the accident was minor in nature or damage only). The town did not find it necessary to employ traffic wardens to manage congestion until 1967.¹³ Nonetheless, increases in traffic allowed proactive beat constables to search car parks during the day, and scour the streets during night shift, for stolen or fraudulent vehicle excise licences (tax discs) providing a distraction from routine duties.¹⁴ The percentage of constables allocated to traffic policing in England and Wales in 1966 was 15-20 per cent.¹⁵ In South Shields, it was 12.5 per cent. Due to its relative isolation, the town did not experience the same degree of traffic congestion as other towns.¹⁶

Constables were allocated unpopular point duty, particularly on Saturdays to manage traffic in King Street (the main street of the town). Policewomen and

¹² A breakdown of the nature of the calls is unavailable.

¹³ SSCCAR, 1967.

¹⁴ 2nd Interview RF; 2nd Interview AR, Interview with KR.

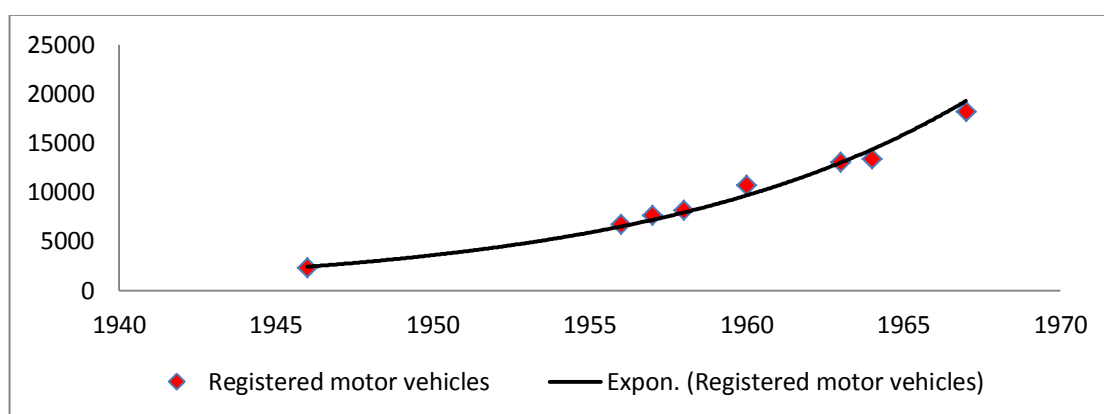
¹⁵ Claire Corbett. *Car Crime*. (Cullompton: Willan), 26.

¹⁶ SSCCAR, 1966.

special constables were also used to manage congestion generated by tourism in the summer season.

I worked the King Street point in the trolley bus and motor bus days. When a diesel bus came along you got it past quick, otherwise you got covered in all the fumes. You used to pray for a member of the public to make some kind or report to you...just to give you a break.¹⁷

There are difficulties in identifying the actual number of motor vehicles registered in South Shields in the post-war period, figures are not available from uniform sources or for all years.¹⁸ However, trend analysis indicates continual increases in motor vehicles registered in the town (see Figure 12). The police priority, in relation to the growth of road traffic, was the associated high levels of personal injuries. In 1966 for example, the force recorded 704 accidents, of which 407 involved injuries to 505 persons.¹⁹



Year	1946	1956	1957	1958	1960	1963	1964	1967
Vehicles Registered	2260	6677	7599	8100	10699	13040	13321	18180

Figure 12: Exponential rate of motor vehicles registered in South Shields 1946-1967

Source: SSCCARs 1946-1967.

¹⁷ Interview CW.

¹⁸ Figures for vehicles registered in the town were merged into regional data and from 1965 into national data, limited local data was recorded in the SSCCARs.

¹⁹ SSCCAR, 1966.

Road traffic issues, improved communications, and increases in recorded crime rates, fuelled greater demands on the police. Calculations made to determine increased demand in South Shields do not take account of the proactive work of constables (for example, summary offences they identified or incidents emanating from routine work including public and external police enquiries). What was clear was the detraditionalisation of society placed a significant amount of additional demand on the police.

Society was becoming more mobile and the use of private telephones increased. This created higher expectations by the public of swift service by the police.²⁰ The practice of foot patrol officers walking their beat providing surveillance, and a visible crime prevention presence, were ineffective at addressing the 'demand gap'. One potential solution was to have better contact with foot patrol officers to allocate them tasks, thus spreading the workload between foot and mobile officers. Such a system was reliant on the development of a personal radio. Ultimately, the debate on the effectiveness of policing was an economic one, where the search was to establish the most efficient means to police greater demand with limited resources. Therefore, the search in the 1960s turned to mobility and communication technology.

Police boxes and pillars: communication on the beat

Most urban police forces by the early 1930s had adopted the use of police box and pillar systems providing telephony communication between patrolling officers and police headquarters.²¹ South Shields followed the trend and introduced their box system on 17 August 1930.²² The economies derived by their introduction led to a reduction in the police establishment of two.²³ Other forces with less financial resources incorporated public telephone kiosks, rather than bespoke police boxes.²⁴

The introduction of the box system led to a restriction in the freedom that constables had previously enjoyed. Supervisors were more aware of where

²⁰ HMICAR, 1964.

²¹ In England and Wales 114 forces out of 183 used boxes or pillars by 1939. Bunker, 2011, 132f.

²² Barnes, 19.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Young, 304.

they were, and what they should be doing. These impositions, together with the efficiency savings generated, made the introduction of the police box system unpopular with the constable as it increased the amount of tasks he undertook with no increase in resources, leading many forces to introduce pedal cycle patrols, allowing constables to cover a greater area.²⁵ Some, including Newcastle, and eventually South Shields, introduced motorbikes for beat patrols, a cheaper alternative to motor cars.²⁶

The town had 21 geographical beats containing strategically placed police boxes and pillars. The boxes, made of concrete, had seven sides, and a strange shaped roof described by the narrators as 'pagoda style'.²⁷ They contained a telephone; first-aid kit; a bench and stool; a book to update various items of information; and a small brush and shovel to clean the box.²⁸

Constables were ordered to patrol a given route and a list of times they were to contact the police station. They received instructions from the shift inspector as to whether to patrol their beat clockwise, or anti clockwise. As a result, a supervisor would know in what direction the officer was patrolling, and the time a call was due from him. This (in theory) rendered a constable easy to find. The patrolling officer had only a brief designated period in which to make his call, as other constables also had calls to make and the telephone operator noted when they were received. The pillars, boxes, and the three police sub stations, were equipped with an orange flashing light, activated by the telephone operator to summon patrolling officers in emergencies (see Figure 13).²⁹

If the constable failed to make a call, a search to find him was made. These were resource intensive and consequently, failing to ring from an allocated place without good cause, was a disciplinary offence. Such restrictions, imposed with rigorous control, created disciplinary offences surrounding

²⁵ Klein, 2010, 43.

²⁶ Bunker, 2011, 49.

²⁷ The boxes were manufactured by, 'The Croft Granite, Brick and Concrete Company', of Leicester. Bunker, 2011, 96. Various forces had different designs for their boxes.

²⁸ Constables smoked in the boxes; the interiors were stained and smelled of tobacco. Cigarette butts and litter were swept away with the brush.

²⁹ Pillars, leased from the Post Office, were introduced in August 1936. *Shields Gazette* SS/G/5 August 12 1936, South Shields Local Studies Library.

when an officer made his call, how long he was in the box, missing a call, or failing to record message details. This led to some officers loathing their introduction.³⁰ Their method of patrol had detraditionalised; replaced with one they felt was to their detriment. But there are no recorded negative reactions by constables in South Shields to the introduction of the police box system - it appears that most 'younger' officers saw them as "innovative and a useful means of communication" (indicating generational differences).³¹



Figure 13: South Shields borough police box circa 1954 (Marsden Bay)

Source: Photograph reproduced with permission of Mr Norman Bell.

The requirement of the constable to use police boxes in a regimented and methodical way was a favoured means of supervision finding cause to discipline. New discipline offences had emerged with the introduction of the box system including men idling their time, or smoking and chatting to a colleague in the box. Discipline charges were avoidable, if the constable had previous knowledge of the supervisor. In the following instance, a constable found in a box (early 1950s) with two colleagues initially avoided discipline

³⁰ Klein, 2011, 99.

³¹ Renton-Gordon, 33-36.

charges, because of his knowledge of a previous indiscretion by the inspector:

He opened the door and here's three policemen in the box. Before he could say anything I said, "I'm sorry, I'm to blame for this Inspector, I've been telling them a story." He says to me, "You get in the car, other two get out, get on your beats." He got in the car beside me, he says, "If it had of been anybody else, but you, I would have done the lot of you." I said, "I don't think so Inspector." He says, "What do you mean?" I say, "You'd have had to explain the story of the bike." "You think so do you, right I'll mark your card."

A while afterwards, I'm finishing at two in the morning. I made my last call at the box and I'd made up my pocket book because I'd had a busy night, I think my telephone call was three minutes past one. I came out the box at ten past one, here's the inspector's car, behind the box. He must have taxied down quietly with a view to catch me because, it was common for a policeman in his last hour of duty, having made his last call, to put his feet up have his pipe or his cigarette and just relax and then amble back to finish at the station. I thought, 'You're trying to catch me there'. He's very abrupt he says, "What time did you ring in?" I said, "Three minutes past." "What have you been doing, until now?" I said, "Catching up with work, writing up my pocket book." "Right, I'll make you so and so and so and so..." of course he booked me. I had to watch out.³² (Group A)

However, supervision had to have evidence that a discipline offence had occurred. This led to officers inventing scenarios in an attempt to avoid charges, often without success.

About three in the morning, I sat down in a shelter in the Marine Park and dropped off to sleep. The box outside the park was flashing. The nightshift operator realised I was missing and flashed the group of boxes on my beat. I got down, rang in – a car pulled up and the inspector got out. He asked why I was late. I told him I'd been examining property and let time slip. He accused me of being asleep...perfectly true, but I wasn't going to admit it, because I hadn't been caught.

I was reported to the chief constable and told one Saturday morning that the chief wanted to see me eight o'clock that evening. Any social arrangements I had were cancelled. 'You will attend'. Otherwise, you commit a further offence of failing to obey an order. I went down, got my telling off. It made you careful not to get caught, there were so many loopholes, so many offences.³³ (Group A)

From 1947-1968 there were changes in the patrol arrangements of beat officers in South Shields. There were occasions when officers were required to start and finish their duty at police boxes. However, they mostly paraded for duty at police headquarters or one of the three sub-stations at West Park, Harton, or Whiteleas. When a group of officers were found off their beat in the late 1950s, the force introduced a more regimented system of foot patrol. Officers now had to patrol 'left about' or 'right about', with the regular phone

³² 1st Interview NB.

³³ 1st Interview BA.

call being made at designated times and locations.³⁴ Constables were issued with a table detailing these requirements.



Figure 14: Police pillar, Woodbine Street, South Shields 1961

Source: Private collection J Buglass.

In 1966, the installation of a new telephone system at South Shields Police Headquarters allowed for the relocation of boxes and pillars. In 1967 their numbers dwindled from 48 to 25 (seven police boxes, and 18 pillars).³⁵

During the latter part of that year, 30 personal radio sets were in use and so the need for telephone communication diminished.³⁶ The remaining boxes and pillars were re-located to strategic points, mainly for use by the public and these remained in place until at least the early 1970s. Some police historians argue that the demise of the boxes and pillars was evident from the early 1960s; in South Shields they were a feature for the whole of that decade and beyond.³⁷

The beat constable made decisions based on the location of the box or pillars.³⁸ Prior to the introduction of the personal radio, constables needed to

³⁴ 2nd Interview BA. 3rd Interview FD.

³⁵ SSCAR, 1967.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Edwards, 40, for example cites the police box system operated until the 'early' 1960s.

³⁸ Described in chapter six.

be aware of their locations as a matter of personal safety. The boxes had three prime functions: communication, supervision and safety checks; the box was often the place for the constable to summon assistance or secure a violent prisoner.³⁹ One constable recalled how, when on foot patrol, he encountered four men stealing from a car. He arrested one; the others ran away. He was en route to a police pillar to summon assistance when the three escapees returned, intent on releasing their colleague:

I had a prisoner and the other three trying to get hold of us. Fortunately, I wasn't too far away from the pillar. I managed to pull the door open and say, "send reinforcements". At that point, they came to get him away. I got my little wooden truncheon out. They were punching and kicking. I had him in front of me around the neck, so he took quite a few of them. I used my truncheon to fend them off, which was a waste of time. One of them grabbed the end of the truncheon, held on to it, struggled and pulled. The leather strap just snapped on the truncheon, and he had it, so he came back at me to hit me. He brayed me on the back of the hand with it. Somebody had been on the switchboard, and heard when I needed assistance. Assistance came, and we got the one I still had, the rest were away. Eventually, we got two more, but we never found out who the fourth one was. My hand came up like a pudding, and I had to go to hospital and have it bandaged.⁴⁰ (Group B)

Opening a door on the police pillar triggered the receiver and automatically alerted the police station switchboard.⁴¹ This incident represents the risks associated with being a foot patrol officer, although it was rare for a constable to officially report the use of his truncheon. Constables were selected for their size and an assumed ability to fight their way out of trouble. It was accepted they would often engage in physical confrontation.⁴² The only means by which they could call for assistance, when any distance from a pillar or box, was by blowing a police whistle. However, as one narrator recalled, this was rare and ineffective:

The only thing you had to call out was your whistle. I was at Laygate one night, and I heard this whistle. I thought, 'somebody playing around'. I didn't bother. The policeman was about 100 yards away, being beaten up. I won't tell you what he called me. I heard the whistle but I thought it was some yobs playing around.⁴³ (Group A)

Charges for assaulting the police were uncommon, they would have to be serious to be pursued. It is noteworthy that some borough forces considered it a matter of pride that their police could 'not' be assaulted, leading to some

³⁹ Cain, 56.

⁴⁰ 1st Interview JB.

⁴¹ Bunker, 2011, 74.

⁴² Shpayer-Makov, 2012, 142.

⁴³ 1st Interview DH.

refusing to accept such charges.⁴⁴ There was a sufficient level of violence to officers encountered in South Shields for the force to offer training in judo at a local self-defence club from July 1965.⁴⁵

When arresting violent prisoners the constable had to subdue and escort them, often some distance, to a police box or pillar to summon assistance. A process facilitated with the use of snips.⁴⁶ Snips were a steel pincer implement, designed to cause the prisoner pain and conform to the demands of the constable. Issued in preference to handcuffs, they were standard issue in Northumbria Police until 1980.⁴⁷ They were effective in escorting prisoners into a police box until assistance arrived. Some prisoners were extremely violent and snips were required to move them even a short distance from the box to a police vehicle:

The van came...it took five of us to get him in. When I took the snips off at the station, the two sides had twisted. The two edges of the snips had moved about that much [indicated 1cm] out of line. I used them two or three times on violent people, but you had to be careful; you could break somebody's wrist no problem, with them.⁴⁸ (Group B)



Figure 15: Police snips open (left) and closed (right)

Source: Photograph by the author.

Police historians argue that the police box system was introduced to improve

⁴⁴ Dobson, 31.

⁴⁵ SSCAR, 1965, 53 officers took part.

⁴⁶ Manufactured by Hiatts of Birmingham. The constable held the left (larger) portion and the right clipped onto the wrist of the offender.

⁴⁷ Authors recollection, they were replaced with ratchet handcuffs.

⁴⁸ 1st Interview, GT.

efficiency, by making officers more accessible and reducing human resources, but they did increase the demands made of the constable.⁴⁹ Nonetheless, it offered him more security, and a method of contact with his station that had not previously existed. This came at the cost of reduction to his freedom of movement, an increase in the demands of his time and new risks of being disciplined.

The police box was an intrinsic tool used by operational officers for forty years and as such, it became a traditional feature of urban street furniture. Nonetheless, the emerging 'demand gap' still required a more effective and efficient system of policing. One proposed solution was the introduction of personal radios.

Police technology

The post-war period, and particularly the 1960s, saw increases in the experimental use of technology for the police. This was to counter increasing concerns of rising crime rates, improve efficiency and provide a response for civil defence in the event of war.⁵⁰ The provision of centralised, shared support services, including the development of Regional Criminal Records Offices, a Home Office Regional Wireless Service, and greater emphasis on regional forensic services, provided the Home Office a foundation upon which to promote a modernisation programme and encouraged a more cohesive police service. This was in keeping with a wider remit by the government to support the use of technology.⁵¹

Wireless, as a means of police communication, had developed from the early decades of the twentieth century.⁵² However, they were virtually unknown in the majority of police forces until the end of the Second World War.⁵³ By 1964, significant technical innovations introduced included: the testing and

⁴⁹ Klein, 2011, 100; and Weinberger, 1995, 41; and Bunker, 2011.

⁵⁰ An example being helicopters used as observation platforms during times of war HMICAR, 1955.

⁵¹ David Edgerton. "The 'White Heat' Revisited: The British Government and Technology in the 1960s." *Twentieth Century British History* 7, no. 1 (1996): 53-82.

⁵² The first radio communication was a fire warning system in Stretham London in 1900. Brian Pears, "Directorate of \telecommunications: History Police on MF." *Directorate of Telecommunications Web Site*. 1988. <http://www.dtels.org> (accessed June 2, 2009), 1.

⁵³ Ingleton, 147.

production of personal radios; the use of telephone lines for transmitting photographs; radio transmitting burglar alarms; experimenting with computer technology; and the introduction of portable speed measurement meters.⁵⁴ The implementation of a more professional police service, requiring officers to be aware of and proficient with the use of technology, was a feature of policing in the 1960s that would change police occupational culture.⁵⁵ Foot beat patrol would detraditionalise, from one with little communication other than by telephones in boxes and pillars, to a reliance on wireless technology. Professionalism would be recognised: by the acquisition of specialist knowledge in aspects of policing; the development of police units for specific tasks; adopting technology; vehicular policing; computerisation; telecommunications; and the use of informed discretion, with an emphasis on the collection of information and evidence before arrest instead of following arrest.⁵⁶ The majority of these features began to combine, or originate, in the 1960s. They were not intrinsically new; they were the outcome of an acceleration of pre-existing developments. However, whilst intelligence gathering by constables became a working administrative function with the introduction of a collator, policing had not yet developed a common need to foster information or evidence gathering prior to arrest. Nonetheless, the 1960s marked a significant shift in the professionalisation of the police service.

The latter half of the 1960s saw the introduction of many technical innovations to an organisation normally viewed as resistant to change.⁵⁷ Yet pressures on resources created by the 'demand gap' presented little option than to explore alternative, and more effective methods of policing. This was a radical approach for many small forces considered conservative, traditional institutions. The Home Office, supported by a few forceful chief constables, was keen to exploit the introduction of improved technology.⁵⁸ The 1960s marked the beginning of continuing, rapid, change in the development of

⁵⁴ HMICAR, 1964.

⁵⁵ Sklansky, 24.

⁵⁶ Holdaway, 435.

⁵⁷ Ratcliffe, 16.

⁵⁸ Emsley, 1996, 175.

police management systems, methods and technology; a continuing feature of contemporary policing.

The radio

Some police forces were swift to experiment with the early use of telegraphy and telephony as a means of police communication. However, change was generally pushed onto the police by central pressure from the Home Office and often in response to an emergency. For example, during the General Strike of 1926, the threat of civil insurrection led to chief constables installing radio receivers in their stations to monitor regional BBC broadcasts. The first use of radio by police in the north east of England was for this purpose.⁵⁹ The development of wireless communications followed a similar route to that of the police signal box where modernisation in police technology followed shortly after its commercial development.

As the Second World War approached, the Home Office recognised that there would be a need for wireless communication for police and fire brigade purposes and that additional telephone access would be required.⁶⁰ Some radio provision was afforded during the war, at the risk of emergency services inadvertently conveying information to the enemy.⁶¹ However, it would be easy to over-estimate the cover provided by radios during this period. Even by 1948, only 42 out of 128 county and borough forces were operating wireless schemes.⁶²

Due to the lack of a telephony system, using a telegraphy wireless required training in Morse code. This in itself created resource and training problems. For example it was difficult to train police officers in the use of Morse code when they were over the age of 25.⁶³ This age restriction tended to remove CID officers from the role of radio operator.⁶⁴ The cost of installation, and training, may well have been a prohibiting factor in the development of a

⁵⁹ Pears, 1987, 6.

⁶⁰ Dixon, 58, refers to the Home Office circular HO 366580/87 of 23 March 1939.

⁶¹ Ibid, 61.

⁶² HMICAR, 1948.

⁶³ Bunker, 2011, 132.

⁶⁴ The standard of competence required for Morse reception was 95% at 20 words per minute and transmission of 100% at 18 words per minute. Bunker, 1988, 183.

police radio system in South Shields. The force was late in obtaining wireless systems and by introducing two vehicles with two-way telephony communication in 1947 it avoided the need for Morse code.⁶⁵

The involvement of the Home Office, from 1936, facilitated the development of wireless systems. By 1947, they developed a general police wireless service providing radio facilities to all forces.⁶⁶ There was greater access to commercial radio equipment by the late 1950s and grants were offered by the Home Office as an incentive for the police to use radios.⁶⁷ These central developments assisted in the coordination of a wireless project encouraging forces to share services. In 1949, South Shields shared their VHF provision with Durham County Constabulary (the police grant covered the cost).⁶⁸ By November 1951, South Shields had two patrol cars, a CID car, and a van fitted with two-way telephony communication, and their own base station.⁶⁹ Morse code was no longer an important component of wireless communication.⁷⁰

In 1953, the chief constable reported that 16 arrests had been made as a direct result of radio communication and by 1959, Sunderland and South Shields police were monitoring each other's radio stations; a move which "brought about a feeling of closer co-operation between the forces".⁷¹ The development of such technology on a national and regional scale led to closer working relationships between managers of police forces and cultivated greater fraternisation and cooperation on operational matters.

National events triggered the use of radio as a crime prevention tool. For example following the 'great train robbery' of 1963 Royal Mail trains were fitted with radios and, from 1964, they contacted police forces as they travelled through their area.⁷² The use of radio technology was evident in a proactive stance taken with crime prevention, for example, by 1967 there

⁶⁵ Pears, 198, 9.

⁶⁶ Home Office. *Report of Working Party on Police Wireless*. (London: HMSO, 1955).

⁶⁷ Pears, 1988, 8.

⁶⁸ Ibid, 19.

⁶⁹ SSCARs, 1950 -1951.

⁷⁰ Pears, 1988, 20.

⁷¹ SSCARs, 1953-1959.

⁷² Pears, 1987, 29.

were 58 radio intruder alarms in South Shields, connected to the police station.⁷³ However, wireless was not the only development in communications in the town. A Telex machine, installed in 1960, enabled the transmission of paper-based messages across a telephone line. This enhanced the ability to distribute information and messages nationally.⁷⁴

The constable accepted such changes introduced over years. They were not sufficient, or rapid enough, to create a negative reaction.⁷⁵ In any event, change was imposed on the police, offering them little choice in the matter. The 1950s represent a period in South Shields when there was little technical change and growth in incidents and crime were easily managed. This was not a period of stagnation but representative of the illusive 'Golden Age of Policing', where "systems were well-established and the administrative procedures were known and understood. Extreme change was unusual and stasis was the norm."⁷⁶

By 1962, all police vehicles in South Shields were equipped with wireless communications systems.⁷⁷ However, until the introduction of the personal radio, beat constables continued on their mundane daily round of checking property, attending to routine duties and policing public order.

The tedium of such patrols may occasionally have been broken if a sergeant selected a constable to join him in one of the two mobile patrols. One covered the town centre area and the other the outstations and Harton area, known as the 'top mobile'. These patrols, together with the traffic department, attended all emergency calls and provided an opportunity to be first at the scene of an incident thus greatly enhancing the experience of the officer.

You only got sent to jobs when you telephoned in, or somebody stopped you in the street, because the traffic cars, or the 'top mobile', had radios and were sent to the

⁷³ SSCCAR, 1967.

⁷⁴ SSCCAR, 1960.

⁷⁵ Simon Byrne and Ken Pease. "Crime reduction and community safety." Chap. 14 in *Handbook of Policing Second Edition*, edited by Tim Newburn, 341-372. (Cullompton: Willan, 2008), argue that assimilation contrast theory suggests small changes are acceptable; however, significant change can go beyond an extent leading to a negative reaction, 365.

⁷⁶ Young, 302.

⁷⁷ SSCCAR, 1962.

more urgent jobs. It was exceptional for a beat man to go to an urgent job unless it had just happened, and he happened to be telephoning in.⁷⁸

The 'top mobile', usually driven by a sergeant or senior PC, rotated the constable accompanying them on an hourly basis. A beat constable would therefore have the opportunity of mobile patrol for an hour until replaced. However, the close relationship between older serving officers meant some received preferential treatment.

The practice was they used to pick up a PC per hour, and they used to drive around with the sergeant, so you could get around your beat and other peoples beats. What used to happen in reality was he used to pick his mate up, and keep his mate in the car for the full shift.⁷⁹

Such actions, instigated by a sergeant or a senior constable, further alienated younger officers and ensured they knew their position in the police hierarchy. It meant the level of experience gained was not equally distributed. The lack of opportunity to attend serious incidents, and establish a reputation for good police work, could reduce opportunities for career progression, which was limited in a small force. The chief constable reported in 1963 that emergency calls were "Almost without exception transmitted for immediate attention by personnel in wireless equipped vehicles."⁸⁰ However, the advent of the personal radio and increased mobility were to signal changes to the operational culture of the police and invoke some resistance from older constables.

From 1949-1967, the police vehicle fleet in South Shields tripled from seven motor cars and a van, to two motor cycles; two mini vans; a Gypsy four-wheel drive; four Mini Cooper S traffic cars; ten assorted motor cars; and a large van.⁸¹ All the vehicles in 1967 were fitted with wireless; two had public address systems.⁸² The expansion of the fleet is indicative of action taken to tackle the 'demand gap', and a more mobile population.

⁷⁸ 1st Interview JB.

⁷⁹ 1st Interview SB.

⁸⁰ SSCAR, 1963.

⁸¹ SSCARs, 1947-1967. Some were purchased for unit beat policing, discussed in the next chapter.

⁸² Ibid.

The personal radio

The first experimental use of personal radios in South Shields occurred in 1964 when the chief constable acknowledged that with this technology an officer can “Pass a message through the control room on 1001 things, which can be passed on quickly to another mobile or unit.”⁸³ A speedy police response was required to apprehend offenders from such calls. Personal radios were a two-way communication device allowing the constable to have constant contact with his police station. They needed to be practical, small, and robust. Some forces had experimented with various models. Brighton was using one-way receivers in 1933, which could receive messages up to six miles (although they could not transmit).⁸⁴ Walkie-talkies had been used in Durham on a limited basis since 1949 but they were heavy and carried in back packs.⁸⁵ The reality was there were technical difficulties in designing suitable radios. In 1960, HMIC reported that the popular demand for walkie-talkie radios had led to a decision to replace them with modern lighter equipment.⁸⁶ Finding such a replacement was to prove challenging. While the Home Office and several police forces sought to find the most appropriate design, there was a period of experimentation with a variety of prototypes in the early 1960s.

Lancashire Constabulary designed the ‘Lancon’ radio, which weighed 0.5 kg, although earlier versions were heavier, bulky and expensive (£250).⁸⁷ The ‘Lancon’ was considered an acceptable radio for trial purposes and by 1964, several commercial companies had also developed their own versions. This led to the Home Office initiating a major field test of radios in 1964.⁸⁸

South Shields police acquired the use of four walkie-talkie radios in 1964 for use at special events. From that year a constable, a sergeant and a police cadet staffed the control room.⁸⁹ However, the sergeant was also responsible for all prisoners and supervising enquiries that emerged from the

⁸³ *Shields Gazette*. February 9, 1965. South Shields Local Studies Library.

⁸⁴ Bunker, 1988, 187.

⁸⁵ Pears, 1987, 19.

⁸⁶ HMICAR, 1960.

⁸⁷ These were designed between 1961 and 1963 and led to the removal of police pillars, Dobson, 74.

⁸⁸ Pears, 1988, 31.

⁸⁹ SSCAR, 1964.

public enquiry desk. Since the introduction of a communications officer for each shift, the resources allocated to the information or 'control room' had not kept pace with increased demand. As a result, the control room became a busy environment.⁹⁰

It was a one-man band. You had to answer 999 calls and run the control room yourself because the sergeant who was in charge spent more time in the cellblock. It was all paper based in those days. The telephone would go, you'd take the message as appropriate, name address, telephone number, what the incident is about, who was allocated, and what the result was.⁹¹ (Group B)

Ten 'Lancon' and nine 'Cosser' radios were issued to the force for field testing; the chief constable reported that these were "most satisfactory and allowed further deployment of beat officers"; a confident statement considering only 51 calls were made with these radios.⁹² However, constables acknowledged their potential when two plain-clothes constables (issued with a 'Lancon') arrested a team of safebreakers while staking out a shop in anticipation of the crime:

It was a big piece of equipment, taking into the account the size of electricals today, and unreliable. There was information a shop was going to be burgled by a group of men, they used to go for safes from premises. We went into the shop at five o'clock of the evening. We hid in a cupboard and had the door open fractionally, quarter of an inch. We only had to wait an hour and forty minutes, and we heard noises at the back of the shop. Suddenly saw a couple of shadows come past us into the shop, and we stayed tight.

Seconds later the shadows came back again. Heard some noises in the shop, we both moved out together and here is two of the group inside the shop, with a safe between them. This is where the radio came in. We radioed, and fortunately, there was one of the few cars in the area and they picked up the message. They came down the back lane at the back of the shop; we got four bodies. That was the first time I'd used a radio, and fortunately, it was successful.⁹³ (Group A)

Supervisors were unaware of the practicalities of using radios and in their naiveté instructed constables to use them in inappropriate settings. One constable in Sunderland Borough Police Force recalled how he was detailed plain-clothes patrol with an experimental backpack radio, a BCC 46U model (see Figure 16). It should have been apparent to most that it was unsuitable for use as a covert tool:

⁹⁰ Interview KR; 2nd Interview SB.

⁹¹ Interview KR.

⁹² SSCAR, 1964.

⁹³ 1st Interview RC.

I was wearing a duffle coat, because it was cold, they had this radio, it strapped across your chest. It was as big as that and about as thick again [describes ten inches by twelve inches]. This damned great radio with an external aerial. So, you're walking in plain-clothes, with a six foot aerial sticking out, and of course, you got cold, you wanted something to eat something to drink. I remember trying to get into the fish n chip shop [laughs]. I waited until there was no one in, just the staff. I had to bend into the door lean forward from the waist so the aerial would go in, it was on the ceiling, got a bag of chips and then went back out. (Group B)

The experimental radios were unsuitable: they failed to transmit when aerials were not in line of sight (South Shields presented problems being hilly); the battery life was short; they were bulky; and unreliable. This resulted in officers losing patience with radios and some neglected to take them on patrol.



Figure 16: BCC 46U Transportable radio of a type tested in Sunderland Borough Police Force 1964

Source: DTels.org

In 1966 a new personal radio, the Pye Pocketfone, entered the market. This was a two-unit construction; a transmitter that contained a concealed pop-up aerial and a receiver. It had a modern design and lacked leads (see Figure 17). Each of the components measured a little over 6 in. x 2 in. x 1 in. and their total weight, with batteries, was less than 20 oz. It had good two-

way reception at a distance of two to five miles.⁹⁴ The Home Office considered this radio in such positive terms that all previous plans to explore others were cancelled.⁹⁵ They had determined the personal radio to distribute to the police and between March 1966 and October 1968, ordered 21,500 Pye Pocketfones.⁹⁶



Figure 17: The Pye Pocketfone

Source: Essex Police Museum.

In 1967, South Shields police took delivery of 30 Pye Pocketfones and augmented their communications room staff with three civilian wireless operators. The chief constable recognised that radios increased workload but did allow a quicker response; a view shared by the constables:

⁹⁴ Pye Telecommunications *Pye Pocketfone Personal Radiotelephone* (information leaflet 1972). Pye Telecom History Organisation: 2012.

⁹⁵ Ray Stoodley. "Personal Radio Communication." Directorate of Telecommunications, 1. <http://www.dtels.org/index.htm>

⁹⁶ Ibid.

They have greatly improved the use of manpower available by rapid communication, which results in speedier attention to calls for assistance and make police officers currently aware of what is going on in the field of operations.⁹⁷

However, when first used the Pye Pocketfone had teething troubles. Mobile patrols were becoming more common and the Pye Pocketfone did not work inside motor vehicles. Pye created an aerial adaptor in late 1967 correcting this anomaly; 2000 were placed on order.⁹⁸ However, the technical problems encountered allowed the skills of a borough constable's former occupation to resolve issues. Previously a merchant marine officer, he designed a car adaptor for the radios. These were used temporarily whilst awaiting the Pye adaptors.⁹⁹ The initial use of radios presented problems of poor reception; batteries having a short life span; not recharging properly; and being in two parts often led to one part being lost, or accidentally left in people's homes, or public houses. Nonetheless, there was an acceptance that the Pye Pocketfone was far better than earlier experimental personal radios.

Sergeants and inspectors were ever suspicious of their staff. They assumed, sometimes correctly, that constables were not being honest in their assessment of the radios. Reiner suggests that a minority of older constables, sergeants and particularly the CID deplored the introduction of radios as they interfered with their autonomy.¹⁰⁰ Inspectors required constables who claimed radios did not work to return to locations to check transmission and reception; sometimes suggesting the constable was lying.¹⁰¹ There was also a rift between older and younger constables as to the level of enthusiasm shown to the introduction of the radio:

The older cops were horrified, "They will know where we are at all times." I says, "Well you could be sitting and having a pint. You could be on the toilet. You can still answer your radio," "They'll know where we are, they will have the technology," you know, the Luddites among them. We just accepted it as moving on.¹⁰² (Group B)

I don't think they had the enthusiasm, of the younger lads. Obviously they'd mellowed a bit. How can you say it without being disrespectful? They didn't want to know, a lot of times. If they could get away with a job, they would get away with it, rather than actually...sometimes it was easier to just go and deal with it. I mean in those days, we didn't have radios very much, and if we did have a radio, it was hitty-

⁹⁷ SSCAR, 1967.

⁹⁸ Stoodley, 3.

⁹⁹ 2nd Interview LS.

¹⁰⁰ Reiner, 1978, 192.

¹⁰¹ 2nd Interview ABR.

¹⁰² 1st Interview KR.

missy. So, anybody answering a radio could deal with a job. You would find that a young lad's radio worked nearly all the time.¹⁰³ (Group B)

Younger constables recognised benefits of a radio providing support and enhancing opportunities to be involved in more work (a move away from the mundane, monotony of beat work).

It didn't matter what part of the town you worked, if there was an incident and it went over the radio, you would hear other cars and other people call in and say, "I'll come down and attend, pick me up".¹⁰⁴ (Group B)

The beat polis perhaps didn't deal with a lot of things that he should have done, but with the instigation of radios I think he probably dealt with more things. I certainly did.¹⁰⁵ (Group B)

The introduction of radios allowed for the allocation of tasks to beat officers by control room staff who were aware of the idiosyncrasies of individual constables, establishing who were reliable and efficient. This resulted in a breakdown of the strict allocation of tasks to constables who worked a particular beat:

What used to happen was if something happened on a beat and the bloke there wasn't any good, but the guy on the next beat was – he'd get sent. It was at the discretion of the control room. It meant keener officers, that were more able, were likely to get work.¹⁰⁶ (Group B)

The PETA speed meter¹⁰⁷

The issue of personal radios represented a major technological advancement for the beat officer although this was but one item of technology introduced in the 1960s. Others included: advancements in forensic methods; the use of colour film; the expansion of radio burglar alarms; greater mobility; and a new method of police response, unit beat policing. The effect of these innovations on the demand gap is difficult to assess. However, providing a rapid response to suspicious incidents increased the likelihood of arrests. The ability to hear what was happening, with the instant transmission of information, allowed constables to provide a prompt response, without being

¹⁰³ 2nd Interview ER.

¹⁰⁴ 2nd Interview CA.

¹⁰⁵ 2nd Interview SB.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Portable Electronic Traffic Analyser. Alan S Watson and Derek Harrison. *Policing the Land of the Prince Bishops*. (Marsh Barton: Durham Books, 1990), 46.

directed. Such developments increased the likelihood of incidents having a positive result and generated work into the criminal justice system.

Reiner describes the move to police patrols responding to incoming calls as reactive or 'fire brigade policing' and the previous traditional patrol system as proactive.¹⁰⁸ However, in replacing the term 'proactive' he underplays the amount of action taken by constables using their own initiative with new communications systems. This argument is supported by oral testimony and data for the increased detection of offences following the introduction of technology (such as the PETA). Reiner is correct to assign the way constables previously found work as proactive and, following the *en masse* introduction of radio communications work was mainly allocated, and officers became reactive to radio calls. But improvements to communication also led to constables taking personal initiative in dealing with incidents knowing that assistance and advice was available if necessary.

The PETA speed meter was a portable radar scanner that had been in experimental use with the police since 1958.¹⁰⁹ In 1963 they became available for use to all forces on a limited basis.¹¹⁰ They were considered a means to reduce the speed of vehicular traffic. Research indicated they reduced the speed of traffic for a distance of $\frac{3}{4}$ to $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles where they were in operation.¹¹¹ Their use was simple. A box was set up facing the traffic. A radar beam was emitted and on hitting a vehicle was reflected back to a meter, where the speed was indicated on a dial. It only recorded speeds up to 80 miles per hour and was reliant on the police officer accurately reading the dial (see Figure 18).

¹⁰⁸ Reiner, 2010, 79. He further qualifies this term as being an unintended consequence of reforms aimed at achieving different results. Ibid, 244.

¹⁰⁹ HMICAR, 1958.

¹¹⁰ HMICAR, 1963.

¹¹¹ HMICAR, 1965.

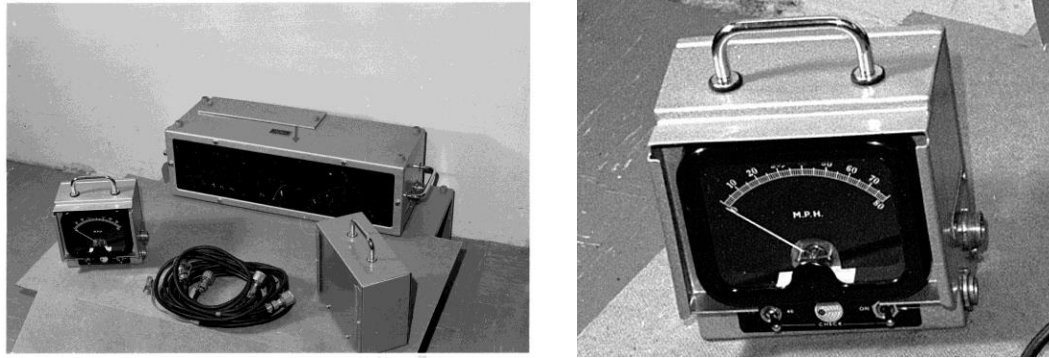


Figure 18: PETA speed meter

Source: DTels.org

The meters were used in South Shields from 1963 and operated on long straight roads, where there was a history of road accidents. they were used regularly from 1964 when experimental radios became available, as the radios were good for line of sight communication. An officer would register the speed of a moving vehicle and radio it to a colleague, who would stop it a hundred yards down the road. Beat constables regularly used the meters thereby releasing traffic officers to carry out mobile patrols. This provided beat constables with the opportunity of being involved in work using modern methods of law enforcement and offered excitement away from the routine of beat patrol.

It was quite an easy way of doing a summons report. You just used the radios to shout and say, "Green Ford, 40 miles an hour" and somebody used to stand out in the road, stop them and report them, simple as that.¹¹² (Group B)

The effect that this technological introduction had in the criminal justice system resulted in an increase of the number of recorded offenders (see Figure 19). The introduction of the PETA speed meters coincided with a significant rise in the number of offenders reported.

¹¹² 1st Interview GT.

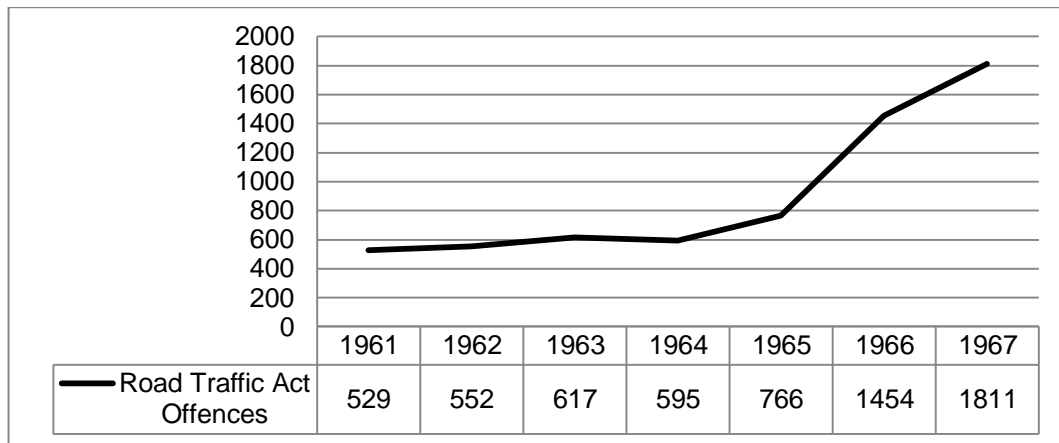


Figure 19: Road Traffic Act offences South Shields 1961-1967

Source: SSCCARs 1961-1967

The introduction of the regular use of the PETA speed meters increased the police workload; from 1964-1967 road traffic offences increased by 203 per cent. Each offence required a file of evidence to be submitted, even if it resulted in a caution.

Conclusion

Within a space of 40 years, the allocation of tasks to constables in South Shields underwent significant change. The introduction of police boxes and pillars had altered the traditional urban landscape and police communications. However, the police boxes and pillars were eventually removed and replaced with personal radios. This detraditionalisation witnessed both change and continuity. The nature of communication simply altered, developed and improved to provide a mobile and instantaneous means of constant interaction with patrolling constables. There was no longer a need to follow a strict route of patrol governed by compulsory ringing in procedures; often used as a means of empowering the rule of discipline. The inter-war constable had little experience of wireless communication, yet by the end of the 1960s radio communications dominated the allocation of tasks.

Changes in policing methods and technology were in response to a growing demand placed upon limited police resources. The demands made

increased in reaction to changes apparent in society, which itself had become a consumer of new technology, made affordable and accessible during the consumer boom in the aftermath of the Second World War. Society became less subservient and more demanding of public services. A faster response to police incidents was one such demand, generated by a wider use of telephones. The pressures of change found within wider society were pushing transformations in the way the police delivered their service.

However, internal changes brought about by detraditionalisation in society affected the occupational culture of the police. For example, radio communication allowed constables to hear what was happening elsewhere. This led to some foot beat officers craving involvement and volunteering to take on tasks; a reaction aimed at overcoming the mundane and tedious routine presented by foot beat patrol. It also produced negative reactions found in generational differences between officers. Not all constables accepted the introduction of personal radio communications easily. Some, mainly older officers, resented changes to their traditional working routine and saw the radio as a tool, used by supervision, to monitor them. This worried officers who had established unauthorised 'easing' habits such as drinking on duty. Older constables held a similar negative reaction to the introduction of personal radios in the 1960s to that, discovered by Klein, when police boxes were introduced in the 1920s. A cultural gap emerged between the new technically minded constable of the 1960s and the entrenched constable of the 1940s and 1950s. Older serving constables were confronted with a far quicker pace of working life; their system of policing was overhauled. They were unable to hide their 'easing' activities as easily as in the past, were subject to greater monitoring, and had their performance assessed, (by their peers, younger constables and supervision monitoring the radio). Further, the public, who were more demanding of the services provided to them (including those of the police), had more access to telephone communications; in using these they added to the perceived and real demands on the police.

Supervision now had direct and immediate access to their officers. The productivity engendered by radio communications, the use of technology, faster response times to incidents and clerical requirements to record and investigate rising crime and incident rates meant the 'demand gap', rather than narrow, would widen. The additional caseload created by the proactive use of technology introduced to improve policing would increase pressure on the criminal justice system. Technological innovation swelled the case files produced by constables which supervision had to ensure were processed.

Those officers who joined the police after the introduction of the police box would have accepted that system as the norm. They would know no different and would not be able to compare their position to that of older colleagues, who had policed without it. Similarly, those officers who joined the police when personal radios, mobility, and reacting to incoming calls were the norm would accept that system, as normal and 'traditional'. The police box system and the lazier days of the post-war policing era were over, heralding a busier police force rapidly moving away from its 'traditional' post-war image. Standardising the police was a key feature of the 1960s and further changes were introduced by the centre to South Shields in 1967 and 1968 with the advent of the unit beat system, and the impending amalgamation with Durham Constabulary.

Chapter 8: The unit beat system and the detraditionalisation of the borough police force

In the years since the end of the war many forces have found that virtually their full resources were required in the operational field to deal with increasing crime, accidents and offences. With the realisation, that modern society is producing so many more circumstances requiring police attention it has been necessary to take a close look at methods currently employed and streamline those methods where necessary.¹

By 1966 the role of a beat constable in South Shields required him to participate in the use of technology. This is not surprising; society had obviously become more technically minded. Increases in the number of telephones, transistor radios, and televisions were a clear sign of technical applications evident in a consumer society. The growth in the use of motor vehicles and the rise in popular culture of 'pop' music, together with the modern façade of new buildings erected as part of the modernisation process, provided society with a progressive ethos. This was the 'space age' where technological advances, together with permissiveness, were reflected in changing legislation controlling aspects of marriage, sexuality, and leisure. The austerity of the 1940s and early 1950s had now passed, society was more vibrant, less accommodating of the deference afforded to an older order, and more willing, with the assistance of popular music, to 'twist and shout'.²

Therefore, the police had a more vibrant and technically aware society to serve. They had also adopted new technology and new methods of patrol. By 1967 constables in South Shields had been issued with personal radios and 'unit beat' policing was introduced to parts of the town.³ The following year however, the reign of the South Shields Borough Police Force ended with amalgamation into its larger neighbouring force, Durham County Constabulary - a force considered by constables as progressive and modern. This chapter will discuss the use of mobility by the police in South Shields in the 1960s and the introduction of new systems of policing. It will assess the

¹ HMICAR, 1964.

² 'Twist and Shout' a record released by The Beatles 12 July 1963.

³ SSCCAR, 1967.

extent to which amalgamation led to certain long-standing police practices ending. Two case studies chosen to reflect these terminations are police cliff rescues and the use of firearms.

In 1968, the director of the Police Research and Development Branch (PRDB, founded in 1963 following Royal Commission recommendations) questioned the relationship between the public and the police.⁴ He suggested the bond between the constable and public in towns was less close than in rural areas, and that “contact with the public must be restored”.⁵ This is at odds with the comments made by HMIC, indicating the high esteem in which the public held the police and represents a shift from the cultural image of the avuncular beat constable.⁶ It is also in contrast to the opinion of the narrators who held the consensus that contact with the public was more regular and intimate when they were on foot patrol. The Home Office tasked the PRDB to establish how the police could best use its human resources and tackle problems of serious and undetected crime.⁷ Its director questioned the effectiveness of traditional policing methods suggesting that a beat patrol constable “does no positive work against crime – you could remove him for some time without effect”.⁸

Criminologists argue that there was a lack of focus by the police in the early 1960s, suggesting the PRDB director was correct in his assessment. This presented a challenge to policing methods unable to stem the tide of rising crime, requiring the police to rethink their approach.⁹ The impact of foot-patrolling beat officers in addressing crime rates was negligible and other methods of police patrol were considered.¹⁰ The director’s comments

⁴ The COI Collection Volume One. *Police and Thieves, Unit Beat Policing*, BFI 2009. PRDB founded by recommendation 44, of the Royal Commission on the Police 1962. Home Office, 1962, 144.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ HMICAR, 1963.

⁷ Weatheritt, 12.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Gilling, 1997, 112.

¹⁰ Weatheritt, 1986, 15, argues the amount of officers patrolling a particular area mattered little in respect of crime rates, other than when an area was ‘saturated’ with police presence. Research has shown the use of uniform foot patrol as a means of reducing crime is ineffective. Ratcliffe, 2008, 21, shows removing foot patrol has little impact on crime rates or public perception. Although Field, 1990, 51, suggests there is statistical evidence to argue that police presence has a deterrent effect on certain types of crime.

represent a shift in the approach to policing which had previously promoted the merits of foot beat patrol and now endorsed mobile patrols. Conflict between systems designed to address demand using technology and mobility, and the desire of the public to retain the traditional presence of a foot-patrolling constable emerged.

Mobility

Mobility in the police service was introduced to address demand. However, some forces were “too small, too conservative, or disapproved of car patrols on the grounds that they undermined the relationship between the police and the public.”¹¹ South Shields police were keen to utilise technology where possible and had increased their vehicle fleet during the 1960s. However, some large cities with concentrated urban areas did not find this necessary as foot officers could cover small beats in areas with a high concentration of activity.¹²

Until the advent of unit beat policing in South Shields there were five forms of mobile patrol: bicycle beats; motorcycle patrols; use of the ‘top’ and ‘supervision’ mobile; traffic cars for traffic management and fast response; and motor cars used as beat patrol units. These latter cars were not marked and were the forerunners of the ‘panda car’ (an integral part of the unit beat system).¹³

From 1950, the force had two motorcycles. Initially these did not have wireless and formed part of the traffic department.¹⁴ In the early 1960s they were replaced by two new motor cycles, a Triumph 650cc used by the traffic department and a Triumph 350cc used to patrol the outer housing estates by a constable allocated from a shift. The expansion of new housing estates into green belt areas during the 1950s and 1960s required policing, without a significant increase in manpower. Motorcycles provided a solution.

¹¹ Rawlings, 1999, 156.

¹² Newcastle City Police for example had two cars and a van for uniform cover when unit beat policing was introduced. Young, 303.

¹³ Panda cars were small police cars painted with contrasting colours, therefore named after the Panda. Richard Cowley. *A History of the British Police*. (Biscombe Port Stroud: The History Press, 2011), 208.

¹⁴ SSCAR, 1950.

I was only on the beat, for a couple of years and then I went onto the motorbikes, which is why I joined the job in the first place. I had no aspirations to be a detective or an on-going beat officer. I worked motorbike beats, the whole of Whiteleas, Biddick Hall and Simonside round to the Jarrow estate, a massive area. You got a lot of calls, out on your own getting on with it, like a mini traffic officer really. It was quite good, apart from the winter months. The inspectors in South Shields town centre would make decisions depending on the weather as to whether people could use pushbikes. If it was icy or snowy, they put the order out 'don't use push bikes tonight'. If the weather was very bad they'd say, "hour and hour about". Which meant you only went out for an hour, got covered in rain or snow and you came back in for an hour to get sorted out, then you went out for another hour. They never considered there's a guy working on a motor bike, freezing to death on icy roads. They had no concept of what it was like to ride a motorbike. You got sick of falling off the damn thing when it was icy.¹⁵

Inspectors held different opinions as to what constituted 'bad weather' to remove pedal cycle patrols or allow a relaxation of foot patrol work but decisions were not uniform across shifts. Motorcycles equipped with a radio were easier to contact than foot officers were. However, the radios were not easy to use.

It had a covering over the engine compartment and the front part of the back wheel. It was a motorbike but a slightly different model to the ordinary run of the mill. The trouble was they just had six-volt batteries. You were trying to run a big VHF radio for the eight hours you were on duty. If you stopped and your engine wasn't running, your alternator wasn't charging the battery. You could quickly flatten the battery, which meant you had to push the bike and bump start it and you couldn't get your leg over in a hurry because there's a pack on the back and an aerial sticking up. The winter was worse because you had your lights on most of the time from four or five o'clock at night right through to eight o'clock the next morning. The batteries were not up to it, if you had a dud battery, you couldn't get any radio communication.¹⁶

In 1964 an Austin Mini Traveller motor car, fitted with a radio, supplemented the motorcycle.¹⁷ This patrolled the outlying housing estates and responded to all calls. A constable from each shift was allocated as driver. Not all constables were allowed to drive. They needed to have passed a driving test. Police driving courses were limited. Advanced driving courses were available, hosted by Durham County Constabulary, but reserved for the traffic department. To drive a police vehicle constables had to pass an assessment with an inspector in the traffic department authorised to test police and civilian drivers. However, there were ways in which to circumvent paying for driving lessons, and constables could take their driving test under the auspices of the police. The following account relates to the mid-1950s:

¹⁵ 1st Interview JB.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ SSCAR, 1964.

I was on the mobile and telling the driver about learning to drive, he says, "Get behind this wheel." This was at about one o'clock in the morning, no 'L' plates, I was driving the police car. I trained with him, I could drive the police car as good as anybody in the end, every night I was on the police car, half past one in the morning, "Get behind the wheel, and away you go." One day, "You want to see the traffic inspector about passing your test." I said, "Can he pass you?" "Aye, he'll pass you, he's qualified". If you're qualified to drive a police vehicle, you could drive any vehicle.

I saw the inspector he asked, "Can you drive?" I said, "Yes". "Have you driven a police car?" "No, I've driven a friend's car around I'm quite good with that." He says, "Mind powerful car's these," they were 16 horsepower, something like that. He didn't know I'd been driving one. We were going along the Coast Road, and he said, "Go up Redwell Lane bank and give us your hat." He put it under the back wheel. "You know where your hat is? It's under the back wheel if you back slip, you'll flatten your hat, there'll be hell on." So I did the hill start all right, didn't damage my hat, he passed me.¹⁸

Driving courses for non-traffic officers were rare until after amalgamation as there was a cost consideration to Durham County Constabulary, who hosted the courses. HMIC commented, "Intermediate and standard driving courses are meant for officers who drive vehicles other than [traffic] patrol cars". There was no significant take up of these courses from South Shields.¹⁹ However, by 1968 the unit beat system and amalgamation process led to a national uptake of standard driving courses of 17.7 per cent.²⁰ When South Shields amalgamated with Durham Constabulary, potential police drivers were required to undertake a standard driving course.

Performing mobile patrol to outlying estates proved popular. It offered opportunities to be proactive and engage with more incidents, including the detection of road traffic offences. It also allowed constables to attend emergency calls they intercepted on the radio occurring in other areas:

I never saw any other cop. Your sergeant might come and see you once during the shift. There was me against the world and you just got on with it. You dealt with anything and everything, missing from homes, domestics, break-ins, thefts. That's when I flourished, when I started to blossom.²¹

You had a much bigger detection of road traffic offences; it opened up a lot more fields of policing especially in the motoring sense. You used to get car thefts and things like that, they became much more detectable because you used to find and catch people driving them. The introduction of radios at the same time completely changed the face of policing.²²

¹⁸ 2nd Interview DH.

¹⁹ HMICAR, 1965.

²⁰ HMICAR, 1968.

²¹ 1st Interview KR.

²² 1st Interview GT.

Managers were aware that there was a level of comfort, unavailable to the foot officer, when driving a motor car. They endeavoured to ensure it was minimised, for example by removing the car's heater.

The only heat you had was off the engine - driving fast to warm it up, but there was no blowers and ice used to form above your head on the tin roof.²³

Mobile patrol duty was restricted to a few officers. Younger constables still working foot beats aspired to be mobile; creative; busy; and protected from the elements. After personal radios were issued constables were no longer isolated. They could hear what was happening, could listen to the activities of colleagues, and share their experiences whilst reminiscing during refreshment breaks. Their working methods were now open to the scrutiny of peers; a significant shift in the traditional way police officers operated and considered each other.²⁴ This development was a constituent ingredient of a deviation in occupational police culture representing a shift from the benign image of policing to one portraying them as 'crime fighters'. This was closer to what the Home Office wanted, a mind-set to address the 'demand gap'. Those selected for driving duties may have shown an aptitude for police work, be it through passing their sergeants examination or having performed some notable police work or it could simply be that their face 'fitted'.

If your face fitted you got what you wanted. If it didn't...and mine didn't, you just had to slog away I did 24 years on the beat, shift work all the time.²⁵ (Group A)

You had officers who were never out of the station, always on nine til five duty and doing admin duties. There were others who maybe were classed as a bit rebellious or whatever, they spent their whole time on the beat. If your face didn't fit, you didn't get any concessions whatsoever, you were outside on the beat seven and a quarter hours every day.²⁶ (Group B)

It would be easy to overestimate police mobility in the force during the 1960s. Even after unit beat policing was introduced not everyone drove a police car. Foot beat policing continued unchanged through most of the 1960s, complemented by mobile patrols. Nonetheless, the police in South Shields placed more emphasis on mobile patrols from the early 1960s as the prime method of dealing with serious incidents. Prior to the introduction of the unit beat system, policing was already 'mobile' in the town. There were: two

²³ 1st Interview LS.

²⁴ Different ways of working create occupational cultures. Westmarland, 2008, 253.

²⁵ 1st Interview WT.

²⁶ 2nd Interview GT.

traffic patrol cars; a traffic motorcycle; the 'town' and 'top mobiles'; a van with a small team of men deployed at weekends to deal with disorder; the shift motor cycle, later joined by a patrol car, covering the outer estates. Mobility was not a unique innovative feature of the unit beat system; its innovation was in the creation of a small team dedicated to a specific area.

The unit beat system

The unit beat system, originating in Kirkby, Lancashire consisted of a dedicated team of constables allocated a particular geographical area. Patrol areas were reorganised into units policed by two home beat constables (living in or near the unit), a detective, and a patrol car operating 24 hours. A collator, usually a constable whose function was to receive, record, and disseminate information, such as sightings of criminals and crime trends, covered the whole police area. They were issued with personal radios to communicate with each other.

Eleven foot beats in Kirkby were reduced to five, providing efficiency savings, and by 1968, 66 per cent of England and Wales were using the unit beat system.²⁷ Sir Eric St Johnson (HMIC) calculated that ten men could now police an area formerly covered by 15. He highlighted that previously there was "lots of information, but none of it was stored" and "where information makes a pattern we can take the initiative".²⁸ This positive accolade was supported by the director of the PRDB who detailed how "One conspicuous car has the same preventative effect as five beat officers; available manpower must be employed efficiently and information must be widely and effectively used".²⁹ One aspect of freedom offered to some constables was that home beat officers could choose their tours of duty and were encouraged to use initiative.

Unit beat policing offered attractive opportunities for increased efficiency and effectiveness; indicating similar economic gains to those created with the introduction of the police box system. It promoted the greater use of

²⁷ Emsley, 1996, 175.

²⁸ The Central Office of Information Collection. *Police and Thieves*. DVD. Produced by The Central Office of Information. BFI, 2009. 2009.

²⁹ Ibid.

information to combat crime and closer working ties between CID and uniformed constables. There was a sense of modernisation, forward thinking and information processing aimed at engendering an awareness of purpose to tackle crime using mobility, communication and intelligence. However, claims that the unit beat system in Kirkby, reduced crime, increased detections, raised the morale of the men, and was welcomed by the public, were not objectively verified.³⁰ Eric St Johnson (the chief constable of Lancashire at the time) declared:

In the last eight months of 1965, compared with a similar period in 1964, there was a decrease of 31 per cent in the number of crimes reported to the police whilst the detection rate rose from 29 per cent to 37 per cent. Cases of damage fell by 53 per cent with a detection rise from 9 per cent to 21 per cent. The number of street accidents reduced by 16 per cent.³¹

None of these claims was objectively reviewed to confirm the data or identify the cause of any trends.³² Yet the Home Office was keen to progress the system, even though their own working parties on *Manpower, Equipment and Efficiency* identified that it was difficult to comment on systems that had not yet matured. Their report commented it “contains so few recommendations since it is desirable that the new arrangements which we describe should be given time to show their worth before changes are made”.³³

There is insufficient crime or incident data available from South Shields to assess the effectiveness of unit beat policing against the ‘demand gap’, partly due to the unavailability of comparable geographic post amalgamation data. The unit beat system had only been in place for a few months prior to amalgamation, although it had been piloted in the West Park and Harton areas from late 1967.³⁴ In the year unit beat policing was trialled in the town recorded indictable crimes increased 11 per cent, with a detection rate of 50.67 per cent; an increase of one per cent on the previous year.³⁵ It is impossible to calculate if such changes were due to the introduction of personal radios, the unit beat system, a faster response to attending

³⁰ Weatheritt, 89.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ Home Office, 1967, 74.

³⁴ SSCAR, 1967.

³⁵ Ibid.

incidents or simply a reflection of social crime trends. What is noticeable is the maintenance and improvement of the detection rate.

Weatheritt argues that there are no records of a fully researched assessment of the unit beat system experiment and much of the rhetoric of HMIC and the Home Office had no objective substance.³⁶ Whilst it appears the initial experiment in Kirkby may have enjoyed some success it was but one of 30 similar schemes that had no formal evaluation.³⁷ The hyperbole surrounding the unit beat system “was a fiction, used to dress a policy necessity in the clothes of virtue”.³⁸ There was a national shortage of police officers affecting efficiency and the unit beat system offered a potential solution. The system provided a lasting change to methods of policing that would emphasise mobility. Previously vehicles had supplemented foot patrols; the situation reversed, foot patrols now supplemented vehicles. Such change was not necessarily for the better.

The purpose and visibility of the shift foot beat constable changed. Due to the accentuation of mobility and the flexibility given to home beat officers his status was relegated with the introduction of the unit beat system. Home beat officers selected the shifts they wished to work and did not work after midnight. Their main responsibility was for incidents occurring in their area, communicating with those who worked and lived there, and the provision of a visible presence.³⁹ This placed the onus on the panda car driver to provide 24-hour cover, with fewer beat officers available for support. Further, the remit of the home beat officer included an option to work in plain-clothes when necessary, leading to the detection of crimes that otherwise would not have been reported, thus adding to the ‘demand gap’. As a result, they were frequently unavailable for allocation to tasks in their area.

You never did nightshift you used to finish – I think the latest was 12 o’clock. You’d pick your own shifts and I used to fit it in with the family you see. That was good that.⁴⁰

³⁶ Weatheritt, 1986, 92f.

³⁷ Ibid, 92.

³⁸ Ibid, 95.

³⁹ Home Office, 1967, 142.

⁴⁰ 1st Interview AJ.

I used to go out in plain-clothes. Got a lot of thefts of coal, off the NCB coal line, from Harton Colliery when it was being shipped down towards Tyne Dock. They were always dropping a load of coal from the wagons when they were stationary and nicking it. When you were plain-clothes you used to catch a few just creeping up on them, you'd a free hand.⁴¹

When home beat officers were absent, the panda car provided additional cover for that beat. Seven panda cars were introduced to the town. This added to the vehicle fleet but required constables to be drawn from the four shifts to provide drivers. Prior to unit beat policing, a shift aimed to provide 21 constables for foot and mobile patrol cover. Four constables were allocated the 'top' and 'town' supervision mobiles, the outer estates car and motorcycle. This meant there were 17 officers available for beat duty (if no staff were absent). There were likely to be approximately 14 beat officers on duty on a shift, if a 20 per cent absence rate is considered.⁴²

The unit beat system required seven car drivers and 14 constables from across the shift reliefs to provide home beat cover, reducing the amount of foot beat resources available for 24-hour patrol. The importance attached to the constant use of the panda car led to further reductions of foot officers when they replaced drivers who were absent.

Table 15: Effect of unit beat policing on 24-hour shift relief resources

Source: Figures derived from SSCCAR, 1967.

Shift Relief Resources	Pre unit beat	Post unit beat
Drivers	4	7
Beat Officers	17	10.5
Beat officers with 20% absence rate	14	8.4

Once beat constables were removed from shift duty and appointed as home beat officers, the onus for delivering a response to incoming calls, fell on the panda driver. There had initially been an expectation that the panda driver

⁴¹ 2nd Interview ER.

⁴² A rate of 20 per cent is generous; the average police officer took 17 days sick leave a year. Training, court attendance and annual leave is taken into account. Figures derived from SSCCAR, 1967.

would park his vehicle, engage in foot patrol, then drive to another area to carry out more foot patrol. This never happened to any extent in South Shields. In time, panda cars became pure mobile response units and lost the link to unit beat policing, although panda drivers learned to pick up beat officers to assist in the workload.

I remember the instruction was they were supposed to spend more time out of the car than they did in the car. Walking around, dump the car and walk around, that didn't happen.⁴³

You were very busy on panda cars, because you had about four or five beats to cover. So beats were uncovered, for say, 16 hours a day, if you were on a panda car you got all their work.⁴⁴

"There is a call you need to go to so and so". "Well, I'm busy doing this break-in that I've been sent to" and it worked out that so much time was being spent by the driver of the panda car at incidents it was practically useless for the area. They hadn't thought of that. The panda car very quickly was misused, and the better part of it, what it was intended to do, just wasn't done.⁴⁵

Reliance on mobility to address the growing 'demand gap', increased the number of tasks placed on the panda driver. The unit beat system in South Shields reduced resources whilst technology, occupational police culture, and growing incident rates increased demand. The foot beat constable was now used as a resource to assist the panda. His traditional role of providing a visible foot presence was significantly reduced and he began to act as a 'co-pilot' for the increasingly busy panda driver.

The panda car was the workhorse. The lads on the beat weren't doing that much, because it was so easy to send the panda car to any job, they were easier to contact.⁴⁶

You can all hear, because the pocket sets were on 'talk through'...an incident at so and so, "Area seven, I'll attend". PC such and such, "I'm at the Nook can you pick me up?" "Yes, I'll pick you up".⁴⁷

This resulted in an occupational culture developing around the importance of mobility and responding to calls promptly. Civilian wireless operators, tasked to allocate incidents, constantly identified mobile units as a first response. The urgency of ensuring allocation to the growing amount of incidents, led to panda cars attending calls 'off their area', due in part to a culture of 'crime

⁴³ 2nd Interview SB.

⁴⁴ 2nd Interview ER.

⁴⁵ 2nd Interview TKW.

⁴⁶ 2nd Interview JC.

⁴⁷ 2nd Interview CA.

fighting' that emerged. When arrests were made (for an offence off their area) other mobile units would then cover their own area, and that of the car 'off the road' with an arrest, until a spare foot officer took over the car. Panda drivers began to lose ownership of a geographical area. In this task-oriented culture, the home beat officer was not commonly associated as being a resource. He was granted more independence and had shift patterns that reflected 'his' need, rather than that of the organisation.

Had strict boundary management been applied to panda patrols, and shift beat officers allocated permanent beats (rather than moving beats on a seven-week cycle), mobility and visibility could have been maintained without a need for home beat constables. The shift beat officer's emphasis on patrolling a specific area began to erode as they assisted panda drivers elsewhere. Sergeants were still able to patrol but were becoming more office bound processing paperwork generated by a greater workload. Life in the police force in the late 1960s was operating at a more accelerated rate.

The introduction of more vehicles made some 'easing' activity more difficult (but by no means impossible). Sometimes, even with radio systems, it was difficult to contact officers. Further, the model of car adopted by South Shields police as a panda was an Austin Mini, not a suitable option for men recruited to one of the tallest forces in the country. Indeed, the use of this small car led to some injuries.⁴⁸

A number went sick by Minis, bearing in mind I was six foot three. Getting down to get into a Mini was low. One of the reasons why they were going sick with back problems was getting in and out of them.⁴⁹

The only trouble was the Mini car was too small. In South Shields borough, the stipulation for getting in the police you had to be at least five foot ten and a half. The majority of policemen I knew, were all over six foot. I was six foot one and a half; there was some six foot four, six foot five. One was six foot six, and to drive these panda cars your head is touching the roof.⁵⁰

There was a division between younger forward thinking, creative constables, and older 'traditional' constables distinctly uncomfortable with the change

⁴⁸ Home Office, 1967, 79, recommended the use of small saloon cars for unit beat policing schemes.

⁴⁹ 2nd Interview DH.

⁵⁰ 2nd Interview TR.

process; foot beat duties began to assume a lowly status.⁵¹ There was a perception that foot patrol would be performed by probationer constables until they became a 'panda commander', or by old inept constables.

Constables still engaged in 'easing activities'. However because of the busy working environment, and being lumbered with a car, it was more difficult.

When they started the panda car system they couldn't leave the car lying around, it was easy when they were on foot and they had no radios to get in touch. All you did was ring in every hour. The job completely changed. They could get up to all sorts; it was very immoral at one stage you know.⁵² (Group A).

The majority of policemen I know wanted to be involved, they didn't want to go pinting all the time, or cups of tea all the time, idling their time, as they called it. They wanted to get involved...to know the job. I was 19 years old when I joined, you're excited, you're in the police force, you want to lock up the burglars, lock up the drunk and disorderly. You just want to be involved all the time; to do the job properly.⁵³ (Group B).

The collator

Not all aspects of unit beat policing were popular with the constable or the public (particularly the demise of patrolling specific foot beats on a 24-hour basis).⁵⁴ Nonetheless, it represented progress towards the use of management information systems and control and command systems, even though ill thought out and not fully utilised. A basic intelligence system, representing a move towards targeting resources against known problems, was poorly introduced and not embraced by detectives.

CID, they wouldn't tell you anything they were very into each other. Once you got into CID, you were made. Traffic, that was a closed shop as well.⁵⁵

I always found the CID a bit aloof. I think they kept themselves to themselves.⁵⁶

The collator became the central point of information gathered by police about known criminals, suspects and crime trends. However, using information as a local problem-solving tool was marred by a limited application of analysis; the low esteem in which the collator was held; and reluctance to submit

⁵¹ Joyce, 2011, 69.

⁵² 1st Interview JC.

⁵³ 2nd Interview TR.

⁵⁴ Loader and Mulcahy, 199.

⁵⁵ Interview TF.

⁵⁶ 1st Interview AJ.

'quality' information.⁵⁷ There was little interest by the CID to contribute to the collator or unit beat system. The relationship between the CID and uniform branches in South Shields followed a national trend. The CID saw itself as an elite section of the service, considered as having an easier discipline regime, receiving greater financial reward, working better shifts, and subject to less scrutiny from supervision.⁵⁸

The CID, were looked upon as the elite. They could get away with more than the lads in uniform because they were in plain-clothes. They could do what they wanted, whereas in uniform you were always in the eye.⁵⁹

It was them and us. The CID just took the uniform bobbies as somebody who covered the streets. They never mixed, they didn't mingle and if they had to have a conversation it was only about the job. There was no social conversation between the two sets.⁶⁰

It was into this environment that the collator was to administer, store, and service the force with relevant information. A basic card index system was set up together with networks to other crime information bureaus. The gathering of information and the publishing of it by the North Eastern Criminal Records Office (NECRO) was well established. They could quickly publish information to all officers in the region when the need demanded; for example if a violent criminal escaped from prison (see Figure 20).

⁵⁷ Ratcliffe, 23, suggests the low status attributed to the role of collator led to little meaningful use being made of the information gathered.

⁵⁸ This was an issue referred to by Reiner as conflict caused by the division of labour. Reiner, 2010, 122, using the social model developed by Emile Durkheim. *The Division of Labour in Society*. (New York: The Free Press, 1997).

⁵⁹ 2nd Interview ER.

⁶⁰ 1st Interview RF.

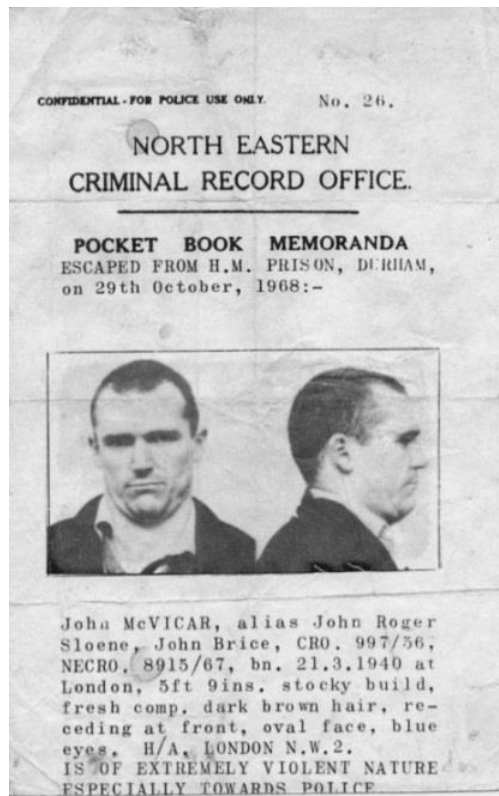


Figure 20: NECRO pocket book insertion

Source: Private collection L Potts.

The collator, whilst founding an official system for recording information, did not instigate the use of intelligence led policing.⁶¹ The CID used information from the collator to refine their trawling missions by extending the net, rather than to cultivate a case against a particular suspect.

Information was passed into the collator, and CID officers used to research it. If you had a criminal the information which was helpful was who their associates were. If you had to search for stolen property, then you would search maybe two or three premises, rather than just the individual one for stolen property.⁶²

Prior to the introduction of the collator, information deemed serious enough was either passed by the uniformed constable to a detective known personally to him, retained for their own use, or passed to members of their team. There was no official record kept of information retained within their own circle.

⁶¹ Intelligence led policing was formalised across all police forces in 2004 with the adoption of the National Intelligence Model where data, information and intelligence combined to direct operations; rather than operations demanding intelligence. Rattcliffe, 4.

⁶² 2nd Interview JH

Bits of information, I'd just mention it to the other lads on the shift, there wasn't any system to put anything down.⁶³

If it was a CID matter you would tell them. If it was traffic, no driving license or anything, tell the lad on your beat coming on and it circulated that way.⁶⁴

We got a collator and things changed then, because you would report everything to the collator and he would keep it updated. The information was available to everybody not just CID.⁶⁵

The input to the collator was mainly by uniformed officers. Detectives were reluctant to provide any valuable information tending to keep this for their own use.

CID men had their own collation system, and you carried a lot of it here [points to head] and what you couldn't, you had in your little black book. It was a two-way thing. CID did put sightings in of different ones in pubs and that. Anything important leading to a big job, the CID would keep to themselves.⁶⁶

There was more contribution from uniform to the collator, than there ever was from the CID, because certain guys in the CID were secretive, played things close to their chest all the time. Even to their own colleagues sitting in the same office. You'd suddenly find something out and you'd say, "Why didn't you tell us about that?" They'd say, "Why should I?" "Well, we're working for the same outfit". It used to surprise me that, but there again, I might have been guilty of it myself.⁶⁷

In summary, the CID contribution to support the collator system was restricted to what was beneficial to their particular workload. The poor relationship between uniform and CID did not improve with unit beat policing, although the collator provided a rudimentary central point for the collection of information for both. The main failing of the collator system during its initial operation was a lack of management involvement. The unit beat system; the collator system; the introduction of technology; the use of personal radios; and the approaching amalgamation, redirected much of the senior management's focus. They had a great deal to contemplate at a time when it was difficult to master and control strategic and tactical change.

The trouble was getting people to use the collator. When the collator first came in it wasn't put out to the ground men, what he was doing and what he was capable of doing for you. The fact that he was going to collate all the information coming in, in a manner which would be accessible to them, if they wanted it, I don't think it was

⁶³ 1st Interview LS.

⁶⁴ 2nd Interview GG.

⁶⁵ 2nd Interview LP.

⁶⁶ 2nd Interview GH.

⁶⁷ 2nd Interview LP.

explained terribly well. One or two might think, 'Oh there's somebody else getting an inside job', not appreciating the value of the collator.⁶⁸

The amalgamation

Roy Jenkins, appointed Home Secretary in December 1965, embarked upon a programme of police amalgamations using powers created for such purpose in the Police Act 1964.⁶⁹ He thought it “operationally desirable” to merge 117 forces into 49. He was also aware of a power-base held in the smaller police forces that meant “promotion could be completely blocked by the prejudice of one officer or by one man staying in a particular rank for too long”.⁷⁰ The large-scale amalgamations were an innovative use of legislation. Amalgamations had been the subject of discussion for many years but lacked political will.⁷¹ Jenkins realised that small forces with an establishment of around 200 could not afford to be technically well equipped and were inefficient. The route he chose to steer the process was to announce his plans publicly and since he believed the majority of forces would volunteer to amalgamate, those who did not would “look selfish and obscurantist”.⁷² The Police Act 1964 allowed amalgamations to proceed against the wishes of the forces, following the outcome of a quasi-judicial public enquiry.

South Shields Borough Police Force entered into a voluntary amalgamation process to enter Durham Constabulary following an invitation from the clerk of Durham Constabulary Police Authority.⁷³ However, this was not a smooth process. The South Shields Police Authority expressed concerns regarding the amount of representation they would have on a new police authority, the costs associated with amalgamation (particularly surrounding assets), and future cost of the new force.⁷⁴ Concerns on amalgamation were primarily with finance and processes surrounding the transition of the force. However,

⁶⁸ 2nd Interview TKW.

⁶⁹ Police Act 1964, section 21 (2).

⁷⁰ Roy Jenkins. *A Life at the Centre*. (London: Macmillan, 1991), 187.

⁷¹ Rawlings, 1999, 157.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Durham Police Authority Meeting 12 June 1967. DRO.

⁷⁴ South Shields Watch Committee Minutes. 27 June 1967, 12 July 1967, 6 September 1967, 18 September 1967. South Shields Local Studies Library.

South Shields councillors had discussed the impending amalgamation with consensus of a need to modernise and that the town would benefit from a larger police force. A wider local debate was grounded on a warning from the town clerk that small forces had:

not for a long time had the support of parliament. The force could be merged with Durham either voluntarily or by legislation, following a public consultation. I have made enquiries with Darlington and Hartlepool as to how happy they are in Durham and it amounts to this, that they do not really have much to do with the police force in their own towns, it is run from Durham – that is it. Gateshead and ourselves are two holes in the county empire.⁷⁵

The River Tyne Police merged with the South Shields Borough Police Force on 1 August 1968 under a Port of Tyne Reorganisation Scheme and, following amalgamation, became the marine division and the policing of the docks reverted to the dock owners.⁷⁶

On 1 October 1968 Gateshead, South Shields and Durham police forces amalgamated. South Shields secured three of the 39 seats on the new Durham Constabulary Police Authority with the cost of policing the town expected to rise from £221,207 to £240,506.⁷⁷ The first establishment for the new South Shields Division of Durham Constabulary shows 361 attested police resources compared with 203 in South Shields Borough Police Force in 1967.⁷⁸

The South Shields Division covered an area encompassing Jarrow, Hebburn, the villages of East and West Boldon, Boldon Colliery, Cleadon and Whitburn. This makes it difficult to compare the strength of the division with previous establishments. This new mixture of small towns and semi-rural villages with the expanded specialist police services of traffic, scientific aides, and other facilities offered by a larger force also makes it difficult to assess if the area was better served under the new policing regime.

⁷⁵ Reported in the *Shields Gazette* 27 June 1967. Local Cuttings Book. South Shields Vol 3. South Shields Local Studies Library. *Shields Gazette* 28 June 1967.

⁷⁶ Durham Police Authority Meeting 25 November 1968. DRO.

⁷⁷ Local Cuttings Book. South Shields Vol 3. South Shields Local Studies Library. *Shields Gazette* 25 November 1968.

⁷⁸ Chief Constables Annual Report to Durham Police Authority 1968 DRO; and SSCAR, 1967.

Table 16: Police establishments before and after amalgamation

Note: *Force carrying three vacancies.

Source: Chief Constables Annual Report to Durham Police Authority 1968 DRO; and SSCAR, 1967.

	Chief Constable	Chief Supt	Chief Ins	Ins	Sgt	WSgt	PC	WPC	Traffic Wardens	Auxiliary Staff
South Shields Borough Police Force 1967*	1	1 (Supt)	2	8	29	2	147	10	6	41
South Shields Division 1968		2	7	17	53	3	263	16	8	45

Keppel Street police station was now the headquarters of the South Shields Division. The acting chief constable Thomas Barnes retired and the old police authority dissolved; the borough force was no more.

The detraditionalisation of policing practices previously employed by South Shields borough police continued after amalgamation. A new management team moved to integrate the old force into a new structure, using standard policies of Durham Constabulary. Many traditional practices used in South Shields did not conform to the requirements of the new force. There were some simple changes such as the introduction of new paperwork for incidents including road accidents, sudden deaths, missing persons, etc. Previously South Shields used one generic report form.

They arranged classes and they sat there telling us what was going on. They told us about the Durham forms and the procedures. There was a very good relationship with Durham. They really seemed to go out of their way to let us know what it involved, the amalgamation. What changes were involved, changes in terms of paperwork in terms of how you'd work.⁷⁹

Working practices in South Shields were reviewed, and some were swiftly abolished. Two examples were the cliff rescue team and the use of police firearms for the transit of cash.

⁷⁹ 1st Interview CA.

Cliff rescue

The cliffs, rock pools and islands on the coast of South Shields are a source of accidents requiring regular emergency service operations to rescue and recover people. The police recognised the attraction of the coast, particularly during the tourist season, and ensured police boxes and pillars were positioned along the length of the 'Leas' for emergency use. They were aware of the dangers of the sea. Between 1947 and 1967 there was a series of commendations and medals awarded to police officers for bravery when rescuing people.⁸⁰ However, when the chief constable took responsibility for operational matters, following the introduction of the Police Act 1964, he decided to form a 'rock rescue team'.⁸¹

The majority of us trained in cliff rescue and they bought an Austin Gypsy 4X4 with a winch on the front, for cliff rescue, but you couldn't control it easily, so it couldn't be used. We had a great big steel stake that you used to drive into the ground with a mallet, and attach pulleys to it. You had a webbing strap that went just below your backside, and another one went around the small of your back attached a rope and then you had a safety rope they used to tie around your chest. They used to lower you down the cliffs and you attached the harness to who you were rescuing and pull them up. Then they used to lower it down and pull you up as well. We used to do regular training. Don't ask me why the decision was made that the police should do it, we obviously shared a yard with the fire brigade and they used to test all the ropes and the harnesses and stuff, but they didn't go down, the police force did it.⁸²

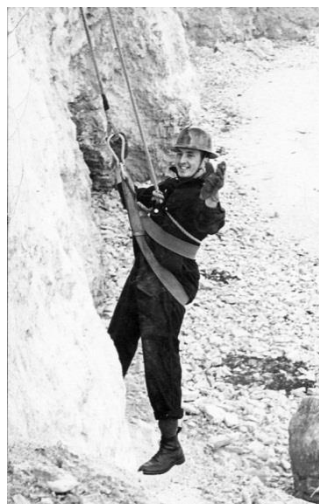


Figure 21: Constable cliff training 1967

Source: Private collection Mr Donaldson.

⁸⁰ SSCARs, 1947-1967.

⁸¹ A Gypsy four-wheel drive car was purchased, and rescue kit carried in cars from 1965. SSCARs, 1965-1967.

⁸² 2nd Interview GT.

The force need not have taken on the responsibility of cliff rescue; they had ensured a system was in place for an RAF helicopter to attend such incidents as early as 1962.⁸³ They also had close liaisons with the fire brigade who shared the police radio system and their headquarters were adjacent to the police buildings.⁸⁴ The police purchased a four-wheel drive vehicle, a series of ropes, harnesses and metal stakes and removed officers from patrol duty to train them to climb cliffs. These actions tended to follow other forces who had recognised similar dangers evident in their area and taken action in preparation for the rescue of persons.⁸⁵ Cliff rescue was also a feature considered during the national project to design and develop personal radios. South Shields were not alone in considering coastal or cliff rescue.⁸⁶ However, the extent to which South Shields police involved themselves extended beyond the scope of coordinating others, to being the primary rescue service.

Table 17: South Shields police rescue operations and associated fatalities 1962-1968

Note: *Data only available for the first five months of 1968

Source: *Shields Gazette* 17 June 1968. Local Cuttings Book, Vol 3a, South Shields Local Studies Library

Year	Number of rescues	Fatalities
1962	8	1
1963	10	2
1964	13	0
1965	18	2
1966	14	0
1967	30	1
1968*	14	2
Total	107	8

⁸³ Reported in *Shields Gazette* 11 June 1962. Local Cuttings Book Vol 3b South Shields Local Studies Library.

⁸⁴ The police and fire brigade shared radios from 1949 to 1968. Pears, 1987, 19.

⁸⁵ For example Southend police carried rubber dinghies on a van for sea rescues. Martyn Lockwood. *The Essex Police Force a History*. (Stroud: The History Press, 2009), 101.

⁸⁶ Stoodley, 1968, 4.

Prior to amalgamation, the force had asked the local authority to fund a small police building in Marsden Bay as a cliff and sea rescue storage and operations centre.⁸⁷ Following amalgamation, this request was passed to Durham Constabulary Police Authority for their consideration but was removed from the agenda.⁸⁸ There are no official documents detailing when or why cliff rescue training stopped, although the narrators confirm it was on amalgamation. They were generally pleased to find the cliff training had ended.

I was trained in it; I didn't do a live one. You wouldn't volunteer, you were told what to do in those days. Put a few metal pegs in the ground, tied a couple of ropes around them, got into a harness and went over the top. You did that twice, that was your training. If you were frightened of heights, you would have been number one you would have gone down first.⁸⁹

I remember as a sergeant going to a meeting in the police club with other interested parties, sergeants, inspectors, and being addressed on the subject, about the intent to form this, 'rock rescue team'. Someone asked, what equipment and what training we would get. "Well, you got a lump of rope, use your common sense". One or two people in the audience objected bitterly, and a chief inspector, stood up and tried to ridicule people for being so soft and namby-pamby.⁹⁰

It stopped when Durham County came in; they realised there are other organisations far better equipped and trained to deal with it.⁹¹



Figure 22: Cliff rescue exercise 1967

Source: South Shields Local Studies Library. Photograph collection, Con 34.

⁸⁷ SSCAR, 1965.

⁸⁸ A brief mention of the application for the building was made at a meeting of the Durham Police Authority on 14 October 1968, no further actions were recorded. The item simply fell from the agenda. Durham Police Authority Meeting Minutes, 14 October 1968, DRO.

⁸⁹ 2nd Interview SB.

⁹⁰ 3rd Interview JB.

⁹¹ 3rd Interview BA.

Under Durham Constabulary's management the regular training of constables in cliff rescue simply stopped. The rescues were still required but now passed to the fire brigade who assumed responsibility.⁹²

Firearms

Constables in South Shields could expect to confront violence; usually from drunks who were unarmed. It was unlikely they would encounter criminals with firearms. However, in 1964 there were 156 firearms certificates in force, one registered firearms dealer, and four rifle clubs in the town.⁹³ Narrators recalled the occasional suicide by firearms and rare homicides (where the victim knew the offender). In November 1960, two Durham County Constabulary constables were shot at in South Shields when pursuing armed criminals; one bullet passing through the cap of a constable.⁹⁴ Firearms still presented a risk.

None of the narrators can recall the issue of firearms to confront an armed criminal or dangerous animal during their service with the borough police force. Nonetheless, the risk of armed robberies was real, and precautions were taken to ensure the threat was managed. Armed robberies were a concern in Britain, particularly in the 1960s, and the use of firearms had received considerable media coverage in the aftermath of the Shepherds Bush murders.⁹⁵

South Shields police knew when high volumes of cash were in transit and ensured the provision of an armed escort. Key occasions were the weekly delivery of cash to the central post office (opposite police headquarters) and the payment of holiday wages to shipyards and collieries. A pistol and ammunition were issued to the escort, who may never have handled a firearm.

⁹² Shields Gazette 2 August 1971, reported the fire brigade as the cliff rescue service, there was no record as to when they assumed this role from the police. Local Cuttings Book Vol 3a South Shields Local Studies Library.

⁹³ SSCAR, 1964.

⁹⁴ PCs Spencer and Kirkup received the George Medal for bravery following this incident. Watson and Harrison, 1990, 44.

⁹⁵ Three police officers were fatally shot on 12 August 1966 in London. Michael J Waldren. *Armed Police: The Police Use of Firearms Since 1945*. (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 2007), 15.

I had to go to Westoe Colliery, when there was a big holiday pay out. They did this on a regular basis. There was a little room with a hatch where the men came to get their money, a colleague and I were sent up there. Before going, we were issued a firearm and ammunition. We were told, in no way, unless anything was to happen, were we to put the ammunition into the gun. We had to keep them separate. I hadn't even been to training school.⁹⁶

They gave me this little .22 Beretta, and handed me a handful of .45 ammunition. I said, "What the hell am I going to do with this throw it at them?" They hadn't a clue really.⁹⁷

Not trained and no ammunition. You had to put the gun in your pocket and go and stand outside the Midland Bank until the delivery was made. Ridiculous.⁹⁸

This approach toward the use of police firearms was not unique to South Shields. Few forces had trained firearms personnel and the ad-hoc approach towards their issue was reflective of the time.⁹⁹ However, following amalgamation there was concern expressed by the incoming Durham supervision of the storage and use of firearms. The provision of armed escorts ceased, and access to firearms was firmly controlled.

As the CID admin sergeant I went riding shotgun on a Post Office van delivering money. I carried a Walther pistol. Magazine in one pocket, gun in the other. On amalgamation we got a new DI (detective inspector), he went bonkers when he found I had a firearm in the desk drawer. So, that was removed and the escort was stopped as well. Which I don't think it should have been on, really, but that was something that evolved through the Borough days.¹⁰⁰

Following amalgamation, all officers received basic training in the safe handling of firearms. Durham Constabulary also considered sending staff to Leeds for a firearms instructor's course in 1968.¹⁰¹ However, formal training to shoot firearms did not occur until the early 1970s.¹⁰²

Amalgamation: the constables' perspective

Following amalgamation recruits from South Shields who joined Durham Constabulary were subject to uniform standards of medical and educational examination. Previously a constable planning a career in the borough force could expect to remain working in that town for the whole of his service and was likely to be a 'local' man. Amalgamation curtailed such expectations.

⁹⁶ 2nd Interview ABD.

⁹⁷ 2nd Interview FD.

⁹⁸ 2nd Interview SB.

⁹⁹ Waldren, 9.

¹⁰⁰ 2nd Interview JH.

¹⁰¹ Durham Chief Constable's Report to the General Purposes Committee 25th November 1968. DRO.

¹⁰² 2nd Interview GH.

Recruits could now be allocated to any part of the county, depending on where there were vacancies.

The Durham force was totally different; things were a lot easier. Discipline wasn't the same. Suddenly your boundaries weren't South Shields, and everyone knowing everyone on the force, and all the rest. It opened up a lot, and the resources that came – new people from outside.¹⁰³

The requirement to live within the borough also ended allowing officers the opportunity to purchase houses elsewhere although still with the approval of the chief constable. This was a luxury afforded initially only to borough officers; Durham County Constabulary with a rural area to cover were reluctant to allow such freedom. The building of Washington (a new town, twelve miles away) and other 'out of town' housing estates, tempting the potential purchaser, facilitated a shift towards greater house ownership. The opening of a motorway to Durham (20 miles away) and dual carriageway routes in and out of the town also accelerated travel.

I'd bought a house in Durham City and I travelled for four years to South Shields from Durham. Initially the motorway didn't go that far, but in time the motorway extended, so even the road was made easier for me.¹⁰⁴

Amalgamation improved the opportunity for career development to those willing to travel. One constable, keen to experience plain-clothes work, was offered an opportunity elsewhere.

I was offered a post in the CID; it meant moving to Chester le Street. That was because I wanted to be in the plain clothes department. "They don't have a plain clothes department in Durham, but if you want to try the CID, move to Chester le Street, we'll see how it goes".¹⁰⁵

Borough officers could not be forced to move location; a concession granted as part of amalgamation. This led to conflict between former county managers and borough men offered promotions elsewhere yet refusing to take them. One constable was offered promotion with a move to Hartlepool (30 miles to the south). He declined and the chief superintendent (a county man) held little sympathy with his situation.

"How many times do you think I've had to move house to get where I am today?" He was a chief superintendent, I thought sergeant, inspector, chief inspector,

¹⁰³ 1st Interview PL.

¹⁰⁴ 2nd Interview CA.

¹⁰⁵ 2nd Interview AR.

superintendent, chief super, I said, "Probably six or seven". "19...19 times I've moved" and he's ranting and raving. I said, "Do you think that's done your family any good?" He just flipped, "Get out, get out, get out."¹⁰⁶

He waited a further two years for another offer of promotion, in South Shields. Although former borough police officers could not be forcibly transferred many voluntarily moved to other divisions for career progression and promotion. For constables who joined the police after amalgamation, movement for progression or punishment became common.

Whilst the level of power held by the police hierarchy was still significant, there was a greater movement of staff, and someone considered a poor manager was not likely to remain in station for an extended period. Management improved in the new force. The changes were subtle but notable. Discipline would remain a key element of policing but managing problems, people and resources appropriately, became fundamental aspects of supervision.

You were always called by your number. You were never called by your name; I never ever called a sergeant by his Christian name, until after the amalgamation.¹⁰⁷

When Durham County took over we got some very good supervisory officers. There was a change because they weren't used to being in one place all their service. They could get moved around. You might have somebody for a few months, a few years, but there was a difference. Their attitude was different, they weren't in charge of you for 20-25 years, you could work with the same sergeant (borough) if he didn't like you...God help you!¹⁰⁸

Specialist support improved on amalgamation and former traffic officers merged into the Durham Constabulary traffic department covering larger geographical areas. This meant when assistance was needed in South Shields resources travelled into the town, breaking down the mind-set of geographical boundaries formerly held by 'borough men'.

You had dog handlers and different things like that. If anything happened traffic cars would come from outside. In the borough days it would have to be a big incident to get policemen coming from outside. But it was quite common then, for an incident, a big fight or something you'd get dog handlers, traffic, cars coming from outside the borough, to assist us, because it was no longer a borough police force.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁶ 2nd Interview JB.

¹⁰⁷ 1st Interview SB.

¹⁰⁸ 2nd Interview BA.

¹⁰⁹ 2nd Interview ABD.

'Easing' behaviour remained. However, a busier working environment led to less time for such practices, nonetheless, drinking on duty still occurred although to a lesser extent than in previous years.

There was one chief constable with Durham, Alex Muir, and he summed up the Durham attitude at the time. He said, "I expect my constables to drink, how else are they going to know what is happening on the beat?" That was virtually the same in the borough.¹¹⁰

Most narrators recall their association with the borough police in terms of the hardships they had to endure from supervision and the mundane task of perpetual beat patrol. There was consensus that after amalgamation discipline was less rigid, man-management improved, and opportunities for career progression increasingly based on selection through merit.¹¹¹

Durham Constabulary now managed issues surrounding personnel, welfare, finance and housing. The status and power enjoyed by the previous watch committee dissolved.¹¹² South Shields held less than a tenth of the seats in the new police authority; an authority holding less influence. The Police Act 1964 together with amalgamation meant there was far less local accountability by an elected body, and eventually, less local men policing the streets of their hometown. Civic ceremonies such as the 'Mayors Sunday Parade' and attending the Town Hall for award ceremonies with the watch committee ceased. The dilution of civic pride was inevitable when the town no longer had its 'own' police force; a key element in the detraditionalisation of the South Shields Borough Police Force

Initially we didn't want amalgamation, because we tended to be so insular, but then we realised the facilities of Durham were much superior to what we had. I think people that had any common sense would realise that they were far better off in the county than in the borough.¹¹³ (Group A)

Conclusion

The introduction of the unit beat system into South Shields came when senior police managers were committed to a range of internal changes, particularly

¹¹⁰ Interview TF.

¹¹¹ Promotion boards were introduced following amalgamation. The Durham Police Steering Committee Appointed in Connection with the Proposed Amalgamation of the Durham Gateshead and South Shields Areas. County Hall 28 December 1967. DRO.

¹¹² Prior to 1964 the watch committee consisted of 14 councillors, SSCARs, 1947-1964.

¹¹³ 2nd Interview FD.

the impending amalgamation with Durham. Personal radios were in their formative years; they allowed constables, using initiative, to be involved in a variety of duties that removed them from mundane beat duties. The 'talk through' system on the radio meant that officers could hear incident allocations, and by-pass command and control systems to ensure involvement. This, in part, fuelled a speedy response to incidents, increased positive outcomes and added to the 'demand gap'.

The detraditionalisation of these policing systems highlighted generational differences between constables and occupational culture was shaped by defining who worked harder, or better, or what type of incident was more 'exciting' or 'fitting' for the new image of policing. An image marked by a difference between those constables who were in favour of such change and those (usually older) who preferred inertia. However, wider changes in society and growing demands upon the police meant change was inevitable.

There is criticism of the introduction of unit beat policing and its greater emphasis on mobility for distancing the uniformed constable from the public. The main reason for its failure was a lack of understanding of how to manage mobile units that became the prime tool in responding to incidents. The introduction of personal radios, used in a new system of patrol with civilian wireless operators allocating tasks, was to some extent initially unrestrained and fostered a weak system of command and control.

Further, the introduction of the home beat officer, with the independence to choose shifts and self-task meant he was not always available for routine incident allocation. This suited his requirements, rather than that of the force. The central hub of the collator provided a proficient move towards the development of an integrated intelligence model, but delivered an information service weakened by a lack of engagement, particularly by the CID.

The requirement of implementing much change in a short time was partly to blame for the lack of systematic control of resources. However, mobility and improved communications delivered a faster response and the occupational police culture now favoured police constables seizing some choice in determining the amount of work they would engage in. This situation would

change with increasing workloads following a massive expansion of the demand gap in the 1970s-80s.

The amalgamation introduced procedures to permit established policies, developed in Durham, to service South Shields. New administrative and personnel processes resulted in practices seen as ineffective, dangerous, or inept, being removed. The movement of staff in the new force led to an injection of outside ideas. There was more opportunity for promotion and specialisation.

The changes meant there would be less emphasis on beat work and the policing skills required of it. The specialism associated with technical innovation, particularly forensic science, served the town more efficiently as regional resources became fully available as an integrated function of the new force.¹¹⁴ However, any efficiency gains derived from amalgamation and modernisation were absorbed by increasing demands. Hindsight provides the ability to be critical of the new systems introduced in the late 1960s; however, they were innovative, used new technology, were part of a modernisation process and it is difficult to see how policing would have fared without such radical overhauls.

¹¹⁴ Four fingerprint / photography officers were to work in South Shields Division (increase of two) regional forensic staff were also readily available. 2nd Interview NB.

Conclusions

This thesis sought to contribute to the social history of policing by applying the concept of detraditionalisation (both as a social theory and as a marker highlighting variations in operational systems) to recognise changes to the working practices of the post-war constable in a small county borough police force from 1947-1968. This era is noteworthy for the unprecedented changes apparent in society, and the police organisation itself. This research worked towards providing a constables' perspective of these changes, a bottom up approach, chronicling their experiences. The key primary data was generated from the oral testimonies of former police officers.

The detraditionalisation of post-war society was a symptom of a more liberal approach to life, which led to a weaker commitment to traditional institutions and afforded them less deference. The mores of society were increasingly diverse. This heterogeneous state made it difficult for the police to appear as the embodiment of a common (moral) community; a community now less willing to trust them. The sacred status of the police, as with some other institutions, diminished.¹ Changes to society were multi-faceted and influenced the way in which the police reacted to it; the police themselves as members of society were also subject to changes within it. Consequently, their opinions, attitudes and aspirations modified in tandem with changes evident in wider society.

Detraditionalisation is a sociological concept that seeks to define social and cultural change in terms of what was and what is. It recognises that dynamic forces powering the process of change ensure nothing remains static. The theory of detraditionalisation that emerged through debate between social theorists is often discussed at the periphery in police studies.² It is rarely touched upon when discussing social change and modifications to policing in broader police histories. More specifically Loader and Mulcahy considered

¹ Banton and Loader and Mulcahy.

² Particularly the emergence of the concept of detraditionalisation following debates by Giddens, 1990 and 1994; Shils, 1981; Beck and Heelas in, Paul Heelas, Scott Lash, and Paul Morris. *Detraditionalization*. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996).

its role when examining the diminishing status of the police in post-war Britain.³ Reiner aptly uses (as a sociologist) elements of detraditionalisation throughout his work particularly in depicting changes to the politicisation of the police and how the police reacted to social change.⁴ However, researching change to practices, procedures and occupational culture in the police force, whilst focusing on the detraditionalisation process, has not previously been undertaken. Further, this thesis builds on the ground-breaking work of Brogden and Weinberger in delivering an oral history account of the constables' perspective of policing, in the post-war period.⁵

In the absence of previous research documenting the experiences and socialisation of constables in small county borough police forces from 1947-1968, this study provides a valuable insight into the working methods they employed whilst focusing on aspects of detraditionalisation brought about by transformations in society, the introduction of technology, and efforts to ensure greater efficiency and effectiveness. This investigation has used a typical small borough police force, one of 73 amalgamated into larger organisations in the late 1960s, as a case study to examine the changing practices of constables from recruitment, to walking a beat and operating a 'panda' patrol car. There are no published oral history accounts that examine these issues in-depth. Historians and others engaged in police studies have relied on publications centred on large police forces and thematic criminological studies examining wider changes in policing, usually at a national level. This work contributes a more comprehensive understanding of how small county borough police forces operated in the post-war period and identifies processes of detraditionalisation intrinsic to the constable.

The Findings: Individualism

Individualism is a by-product of detraditionalisation.⁶ It allows people, now less influenced by established collective experiences weakened by the erosion of tradition, to determine their own level of adherence to traditional

³ Loader and Mulcahy.

⁴ See Reiner, 2010, 78f.

⁵ Brogden, 1991; and Weinberger, 1995.

⁶ Hopper, 34.

ways of life, or to reject them.⁷ This work found ample evidence of a dilution of an adherence to traditional lifestyles in South Shields resulting from changes to society. This was most evident in the experiences of the latter group of narrators (Group B) who commonly encountered less respect, particularly from younger people, and who were more aware of the likelihood of being treated with less deference from the public than their older colleagues were. Constables attributed such changes to a more liberal regime, and less application of parental discipline. Members of the earlier group (Group A) experienced milder forms of rebuke from the public when disciplining juveniles, which was met with some surprise by them. However, any informal admonishment administered by constables was generally supported by police supervision; there was a perception such action was commonly tolerated by the public. Narrators also attributed blame for a change in public attitudes towards the police to the media, particularly following the 'Thurso Boy' incident, and a poor reputation emanating from the actions of the Metropolitan Police. Nonetheless, the narrators expressed consensus with the wider population for example when giving definitions of the causes of poverty or when relaying their own aspiration on home ownership. The changing trends in society were observed within the narrators' life stories.

In the police organisation there was far less evidence of individualism across both groups of narrators. Constables could determine what they did, or didn't do, whilst on patrol and unsupervised, but held little capacity to influence change in the police; and should they have embarked on a crusade of 'challenging' the status quo were likely to be identified as not 'fitting' into the organisation, a particularly perilous label for probationers or those seeking career development.

There were generational differences in the level of acceptance of the strict, often petty discipline imposed. Those from Group A were more inclined to accept their position, and simply 'got on with it'. However, those from Group B were more inclined to harbour memories of discomfort and discontent with the working environment; yet they made little obvious protest at the time.

⁷ Ibid, 35.

The Police Federation were considered generally a weak representative body; for example even though there was a general dissatisfaction with having to perform training for cliff rescue in the late 1960s what little challenge was offered to the decision was met with derision, and constables merely complied.⁸

If increased individualism brought about by detraditionalisation within wider society affected constables, then it would be a natural hypothesis to conclude that a greater reaction to counter the strict discipline regime of the police would be found in the latter group of narrators. However, the strong hierarchical control evident in the police by men who had served the whole of their police career in one town, and who operated in an environment of entrenched traditional authoritarian compliance, ensured that their position was never under threat. The indoctrination provided by national and local police training further emphasised a culture of obedience and subservience, traits that are on occasions needed in a disciplined force.

One option open to the constable was to reject the police as an occupation and to resign. Whilst it is impossible to determine how many constables did so, due to a rejection of the traditional stance engendered by the police, it is clear that many did. Those narrators who had experienced military service (mainly Group A) largely accepted the discipline of the police; unlike those who, due to their age escaped National Service. Individualism as a trait 'within' the police was not able to be easily identified. Outside of their workplace constables were subject to the same lifestyle choices as in wider society, although restricted to some extent by police controls on their private life and the strong culture of social solidarity with colleagues.

The decisions made by constables as to how they resolved problems on their beats could be largely hidden from the scrutiny of supervision. Thus, there was the ability for constables to apply their individualism, unseen. Generally, decisions made were pragmatic, considered longer-term community reactions, and based on safety criteria. Constables delivered informal justice

⁸ Reiner sees the national Police Federation as a 'humble' professional body until at least the mid-1960s, Reiner, 2010, 90.

with the use of violence (although cases of extreme violent action were considered unacceptable by the occupational culture). This provides another paradox: it was unlawful to use unnecessary violence, yet the occupational culture of the police provided levels of accepted and unacceptable violence as informal justice. Yet, when colleagues exceeded the accepted level of violence, peers provided them protection using the 'blue cloak of silence'.

Constables were able to express individualism in the workplace more easily following the mass introduction of personal radios and the systematic use of panda cars as response vehicles. They began to use more initiative and proactively sought to engage in police work whether a car driver or a foot patrol officer. The new technology offered a 'get out' from mundane foot beat patrol. Constables had discretion to determine their individual level of application to such proactivity. Generational differences were again evident; with older serving officers less keen to embrace these new methods of working.

Central influences in detraditionalising the police

The increase in consumerism from the mid-1950s led to more items being available to the public, leading (in part) to significant increases in crime. The loosening of moral bonds and a more liberal approach to regulating people's social lives (symptoms of detraditionalisation) were other factors. The faster mode of life and improved communication networks ensured that more incidents were reported to the police. This created a gap between resources and demand, placing pressure on the ability to deliver an efficient police service. This led to the centre enforcing change in order to address the 'demand gap' and improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the police service. The changes implemented included the promotion of greater centralisation, the use of technology and the eventual role out of the unit beat policing system. These developments represented a significant shift in the traditional way in which the police service was delivered, altered the occupational police culture and signalled a distinct modernisation in police methods.

It is difficult to see how small county borough forces would have adapted their methods without the centralised requirement to introduce new systems of working. Indeed, it is difficult to envisage their ability to survive in their traditional format with the increasing demands made of them. However, chief constables and watch committees were members of associations designed to provide networks on their areas of concern (ACPO and AMG). These fostered and assisted uniformity in the development of the police organisation, promulgated by centralised specialist departments introduced by the Home Office, particularly in the 1960s.

The centralisation process introduced by the government following the Royal Commission of 1960-62 meant the Home Office held a stronger position to direct police developments whilst continuing to observe and influence all police forces via HMIC inspections. The Police Act 1964 ensured that the new tripartite system of governance gave chief constables responsibility for operational policing and allowed the Home Office greater administrative powers over the police, including what equipment they should use.⁹ Ultimately, it was the intensity of change instigated by the Home Office that forced small county borough police forces to release their 'grip' on the traditional way that forces were managed. Such change facilitated detraditionalisation in the police, however change was instigated because of detraditionalisation in society.

Local perspectives of detraditionalisation

The town's economy was dependant on river industries particularly shipbuilding and repair, the transit of cargo from Tyne Dock and coal production. These maintained their dominance although by the end of the 1960s it was clear that the local economy was too dependent on them, they were in decline and there was little in the way of new industrial investment to replace them. Unemployment therefore always remained high in the North East, particularly in South Shields; a contributing factor to the levels of poverty evident in the borough.

⁹ Rawlings, 205, 2002.

Poor housing conditions coupled with poverty and poor education were aspects of community life common to constables in the post-war period that changed following the rebuilding programmes evident in the 1950s and 1960s. Industry benefited from modernisation, for example, quicker methods of unloading cargo from timber ships reduced the amount of time they and their crew were in port. Such changes to the habitat, industry and economy of the area led to the demise of local communities and the 'amateur' prostitute. The urban landscape transformed, particularly around Tyne Dock and the suburbs of the town where new housing estates emerged. As housing conditions modified so too did methods associated with utilities. Town gas manufactured from coal evolved into a less toxic form and was replaced, by the end of the 1960s, with natural gas. The amount of suicides by gassing decreased and disappeared when replaced with natural gas. Potential victims of suicide did not seek alternative methods of death. This is an obvious example of how a social issue changed because of the modernisation process. Therefore, detraditionalisation of police methods was evident by the effect the modernisation process had on people; a reaction to modern living.¹⁰

As poverty changed, from a condition identified by severe deprivation dependant on charity to one where the 'welfare state' intervened to provide health care and subsistence, the role of agents supporting the poor modified. Systems of aid to the poor, some managed by the police, became the responsibility of local and central government. Again, generational differences in constables' experience became apparent for example by the removal of the PACA in 1957. Under that system the police were, specifically as part of their duty, providing assistance to the needy and engaging with them on a practical basis. As society became more affluent, the police began to perceive and experience poverty in a different way. Poverty was less obvious, housing conditions were improving and enhanced access to commodities meant life was easier. The post-war economy epitomised by rationing was, by the mid-1950s, followed by the ability for most to purchase

¹⁰ An issue of particular interest to criminologists. Clarke and Mayhew, 1988.

and possess more. As the economy improved society's link with the era of austerity weakened.

By the late 1960s, constables, and wider society, perceived that those who were unemployed, impoverished or living in squalor had opted to live that way. Police officers with little experience of the economic hardships of the 1930s-40s were less able to empathise with those at the lower end of the social ladder. They stereotyped them into a particular class that lived in noted parts of the town and were problematic to the police - a process whereby the police and those powerful in society considered them 'police property', people to be 'dealt with' or targeted by the police.¹¹ Poverty still existed but took on a new mantle, one not as easily recognised, and with which wider society was less able to empathise.

Communities were uprooted during post-war rebuilding programmes and rehoused into new neighbourhoods; resulting in better housing conditions. However, the new housing estates were usually on the outskirts of the town, distant from former communities, the support they provided and systems that policed them. A breakdown in the traditional lifestyle and practices within the community added to the detraditionalisation of society and created new modes of individualism, and lifestyles. The police had to adapt their methods to police these new areas using greater mobility. This represented a shift from traditional foot beat patrols and the community contact they offered.

Detraditionalisation of police patrol

Beat patrol work was, throughout the majority of the period studied, routine, repetitive and boring. Constables checked the security of commercial properties, were service driven and provided a peacekeeping function in the community. Technological advances in policing, from the inter-war period through to the amalgamation with Durham Constabulary included: the introduction of a police box system; wireless communications; greater mobility; advances in forensic and crime prevention methods; and the introduction of personal radios. The constables in urban settings were reliant

¹¹ Reiner, 2010. 123.

upon the system of police boxes and pillars until the large-scale development of small portable radio communications.

Criminologists have debated the introduction of the personal radio in the context of managing police systems (particularly unit beat policing). None has researched their actual deployment and the attitude constables had to their introduction in small boroughs. This work identifies that the introduction of the personal radio was met with a similar response from some longer serving constables to their predecessors on the introduction of police boxes.¹² They felt radios interfered with working practices, that they were now under the constant surveillance of supervision, and greater demands were made of them. This, of course, was the purpose of introducing the radios, allowing a more efficient means of deploying beat constables to assist in addressing the 'demand gap'. Younger constables seeking greater involvement, a route away from mundane beat work, and who had an interest to engage in more work, welcomed radios, which emphasised yet another generational difference. Supervisors, not clear as to the true value of personal radios, were suspicious of constables who claimed they were inoperative. Such suspicions were well founded, although early radios were of poor quality. The Home Office, keen to exploit opportunities to improve police proficiency, saw the Pye Pocketfone as the solution to personal communications. They were quickly issued and accepted as an operational tool and detraditionalised the police box system that had operated since the 1920s.

Beat constables experienced the use of technology in operations that removed them for short periods from foot beat patrols. The use of speed radar meters from the mid-1960s designed to reduce the number of speeding motor vehicles at accident 'hot spots', showed that technology, introduced to eliminate a problem in statistical terms increased it. Vehicles that had previously continued on their journey unabated were now stopped, and if exceeding the speed limit subject to either a caution or prosecution. This increased the amount of road traffic offences processed during 1964-1967,

¹² Klein, 2011.

by 204 per cent.¹³ When proactive measures are applied, they tend to increase output, rather than reduce it; this was a key issue in the introduction of technology meant to address the 'demand gap'. However, it is difficult to see how the police could have avoided a large-scale introduction of new technology.¹⁴

Following the apparent success of the unit beat system in Kirkby, Lancashire, it was rolled out to the rest of England and Wales. The implementation of the system nationally was flawed and there was insufficient evidence to support its presumed success from the limited research presented.¹⁵ This work examined the implementation of the unit beat system in South Shields and it demonstrated that the management of resources was weak. The freedom that the panda car offered the driver (individualism) led some to being proactive in choosing which incidents to attend and provided opportunities to pursue their own interests, for example by policing traffic. The collator system did not enjoy the full engagement of constables. CID officers in particular were reluctant to provide quality information or engage with unit beat policing.

This work supports the notion that unit beat policing was resource intensive. It argues that: a lack of management focus on the allocation of tasks; allotting home beat officers too much freedom to choose the nature of shifts worked; using 24/7 beat officers to supplement panda patrols; and failing to ensure the CID engaged with the system, led to failures of resourcing. It also notes the large amount of change management required by senior officers at a time of impending amalgamation, which made the prioritising of tasks challenging. However, the shift in the style of policing from service oriented to crime fighting, from 'pounding the pavement' to 'pressing the pedal', ensured the role of the traditional beat officer was detraditionalised.

¹³ SSCARs, 1964-1967.

¹⁴ Stephens, 1988, 61.

¹⁵ Weatheritt, 1986.

Recruitment and wastage

Official reports highlight difficulties in recruiting during the decades following the Second World War. Such problems were not evident in the North East. The detraditionalisation of recruitment in the town can be summarised by: a shift from recruiting outside of the town to recruiting locally; the educational standards of the recruit increased, mainly by selection from skilled occupational groups; tall height standards were maintained until central pressures and amalgamation standardised them; a similar standardisation of medical assessment also evolved on amalgamation. The problems of recruiting, experienced in larger forces such as the Metropolitan Police or Lancashire Constabulary, were not evident in South Shields.¹⁶

This work supports the findings of Reiner that security of employment was the main attraction to join the police after the Second World War. Generational differences were found in reasons for joining the police between men who joined in the aftermath of the war, for mainly instrumental reasons surrounding pay and security, to those of a later period who provided more non-instrumental reasons associated with vocational appeal. However, security of employment remained a significant reason for occupational choice across the generational divide. Unlike previous studies, relocation emerged as an attraction to join the police in South Shields.

The distinctive height of the South Shields borough constable cultivated an elitist stance. The force set the third highest height restriction in England and Wales prohibiting many men being a constable and yet recruiting was not a particular concern of the force. The standard of medical examination and educational attainment were subjective, often determined by the doctor or officer conducting the tests. This reinforces the argument of Weinberger that decisions made were the predilection of the chief constable, or his staff.¹⁷ It was the power wielded by the senior hierarchy in a small force that ensured

¹⁶ HMICAR, 1964, shows the vacancies carried by the Metropolitan Police for 1964 were 14% of their establishment. In South Shields the figure was 9%. The actual numbers offer a greater understanding of the problem; South Shields had 17 vacancies the Metropolitan Police had 3008.

¹⁷ Weinberger, 1995, 24.

traditional systems persisted, including a long held belief that height and image were key attributes required of recruits.

The working conditions of the police presented recruits with a myriad of challenges: fitting in to the system; adapting to a new social position; rejection by former associates; combatting a petty and harsh discipline regime; unsocial working hours and poor pay. Further issues such as responding to aspects of human behaviour, conforming to police occupational culture, and performing a mundane repetitive role with limited career prospects, presented a formula that encouraged many to leave. Ample testimony indicates that there was a need for probationers to establish themselves as 'acceptable' and conformist, to avoid being subject to excessive criticism. Those who did not conform were subject to harsh treatment; cited as a reason by narrators for many probationers and constables leaving the force. The Home Office did not fully appreciate this aspect of wastage and labelled it under general discipline conditions. By the late 1960s however, they had recognised that the police needed to improve their approach to man-management. Nonetheless, whilst the occupational culture would remain strong the post amalgamation reformation meant man-management techniques improved, the job became more varied and there would be less evidence of favouritism. However, such changes whilst instigated by the amalgamation were not sudden. It took time for systems and people to acclimatise to the new regime.

Persistence of harsh discipline, 'easing' and occupational police culture

This work marks aspects of continuity and change. However, in the 1960s and 1970s Skolnick saw *persistence* and change.¹⁸ Persistence, as a form of intransigence, was also evident in this study in the traditional approaches to discipline, easing and occupational culture. Discipline in the South Shields Borough Police Force was harsh, often pedantic and sustained by promotions from within. Occupational traditions persevered, such as drinking on duty, which some supervisors continued to partake in following promotion.

¹⁸ Skolnick, 241.

This led to a dichotomy where those responsible for preventing such behaviour engaged in it themselves. However, there was also a demarcation between the accepted tradition of having a pint on duty and abusing such 'easing' behaviour to the detriment of colleagues and the force. There was therefore a paradox where drinking on duty was tolerated to a certain extent by supervision who also maintained an on-going threat to constables on the beat whom they targeted and punished using the discipline process. All forms of 'easing' behaviour are potential disciplinary offences and sergeants, well versed in the 'easing' practices of constables, attempted to address them either by the use of disciplinary charges or informal methods of punishment. In a small force, those who were likely to bully, intimidate or browbeat constables were well known. Equally, good supervisors those sergeants and inspectors who were approachable and offered advice, were noted.

The introduction of better communication and mobility made 'easing' more difficult but simply led to 'offenders' taking greater care to avoid capture. Easing, police solidarity, and harsh discipline remained a continuing feature of police working conditions. There were some generational differences indicating that the older serving constables were heavier drinkers when on duty. However, drinking on duty transcended the generational divide. That said there is a danger of overemphasising the common approach to drinking on duty or misinterpreting 'drinking on duty' for being 'drunk on duty'. Some narrators were teetotal and others only occasionally drank on duty. Nonetheless, drinking on duty was very common.

The demise of police boxes removed some disciplinary offences but the personal radio offered greater opportunity for sergeants to have regular contact with perceived wrongdoers. The personal radios were on 'talk through', this permitted all to hear what was happening. This meant poor performance, inappropriate behaviour, and poor decision-making was open to workforce scrutiny. This was a double-edged sword as wrongdoing evidenced on air now had witnesses. This ensured possible disciplinary action would be taken; it also meant that poor supervision were also open to criticism.

Amalgamation and its consequence on individualism and the detraditionalisation of police practices

The amalgamation process that brought the demise of borough police forces also heralded the reformation of the police into larger entities, more in keeping with the efficiency model envisaged by the Home Office. However the size, systems of working and lack of corporate infrastructure of South Shields Borough Police Force, when compared to large forces, meant it struggled to keep pace with national developments. Many negative aspects of small borough policing were evident, a harsh militaristic hierarchy, the malady of favouritism, the danger of insularity and minimal opportunity for staff progression. Nonetheless, considering the constables' experience in the context of the time in which their encounters occurred is important.¹⁹

However, the constables were part of the town's community, they lived there, by the late 1960s most of them originated from the town and utilised a great deal of local knowledge. They had 'ownership' of the policing of 'their' town. Most constables welcomed the amalgamation that diminished petty levels of discipline, introduced sleeker administrative systems, removed some dangerous practices, and widened opportunities for career progression by applying systems of selection by merit, and extending opportunities elsewhere in the county.

It would also be easy to overstate a relaxation of discipline brought about by amalgamation, the police remained a disciplined force and supervision still sought out wrongdoers. Poor man-managers were less likely to remain unchallenged however and there would be a greater turnover of staff. Superintendents who carried out the policies and requirements of a command team situated 21 miles away in Durham City replaced borough chief constables who were used to dictating methods of policing.

Following amalgamation with Durham Constabulary members of the public may not have noticed any great difference. The new South Shields Division incorporated a larger area and population with a different set of police human resources, although movement of staff would occur slowly there was no

¹⁹ Waldren, 2007.

immediate mass migration of beat constables and their sergeants. It is not possible to assess whether the town was 'better' policed than under the 'Borough'. However, it is evident that by the late 1960s constables were becoming busier, and would become more so with the widening 'demand gap' that technology and unit beat policing failed to address. The 'demand gap' that emerged in the 1950s and 1960s was but a very thin end of a vastly increasing wedge that would hugely escalate in the following four decades.²⁰

As is the continual nature of detraditionalisation, six years after amalgamation with Durham Constabulary the police of South Shields Division were amalgamated yet again, into a far larger force, Northumbria.

Limitations on research

Data created by the use of oral history consist of the perceptions, opinions and memories of the individual. They are composed and constructed by them in light of their contemporary awareness of 'self', with the use of agency to present a performance during the interview. A different interviewer on a different day, asking a slightly different question, is likely to receive an altered response such is the nature of human interaction. However, whilst oral history is a process of conducting and recording interviews about the past it is also the product of that interview. It is both a research methodology and the result of the research activity.²¹ Oral evidence is validated by the extent to which an individual provides reliable information of their historical experience, and that experience is typical of its time and place.²² This is not to infer that oral testimony provides an accurate reproduction of the past, it does not. Just as in forensic investigations, witnesses who provide evidence do so from their perspective, it is for those who assess the quality of the evidence to determine if it withstands the robustness of scrutiny. In a criminal court, the standard required is one beyond reasonable doubt. For a historian the criterion is one of best evidence found while searching for substantiations that emerge over time, although being cautious of weak

²⁰ Ratcliffe, 19.

²¹ Abrams, 2.

²² Trevor Lummis. "Structure and Validity in Oral Evidence." Chap. 20 in *The Oral History Reader*, edited by Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson, 255-261, Abingdon: Routledge, 2006, 256.

evidence. The narratives of the oral history project when compared against trace documents (that can also lack faithfulness to the 'truth') displayed elements of typicality, sufficient to merit their inclusion as primary data. This work has therefore produced primary data, useful in filling in many gaps and providing insights not available in official records.

The creation of 36 life stories and oral histories covering experiences from the 1920s to the present day, contained material outside the scope of the subject researched. Much data, whilst typifying detraditionalisation, was not wholly relevant to the constable on the beat, examples include: the CID; policewomen; cadets; managing serious and specialist incidents; the development of forensics; traffic department etc. This is indicative of the eclectic duties undertaken by the police and the options they have in developing their career in specialist posts or by promotion. However, the constable was reliant on these departments and services. This work recognises that the picture presented is limited to presenting a perspective of policing confined to the practices of operational uniformed foot beat constables. Whilst contributing to the knowledge of policing the research has been limited to the experiences of the police. The views, opinions and experiences of victims, witnesses, offenders and civilian staff as well as the judiciary and those who were involved in police governance would be needed to provide a more holistic account of policing performance.

Boroughs are socially and geographically separate and have diverse economic and political cultures in different local settings. As there were so many police forces at the end of the Second World War, each with its own character formed by the nature of its community and heritage, it is unlikely that they would all share an exact, uniform experience. By concentrating on one small borough police force, the views and narratives of constables from neighbouring forces were not a primary consideration. This limits the representativeness of the research to one police force, similar to Brogden's work.²³ The experiences of how constables in large county forces merged with former borough constables and how they dealt with change would be useful in identifying the benefits derived to county forces by amalgamation.

²³ Brogden, 1991.

The counties absorbed constables accomplished in policing urban areas; what experiences and lessons were gained from them?

The effects of detraditionalisation would become more noticeable in the British society of the 1970s and 1980s and the impact and development of new technology would be more obvious. It would be of interest to take the model of research used in this study and apply it to other forces for the same period, and expand it into the next generation of constables. Nonetheless, whilst these areas of perceived weakness may provide opportunities for further research, the current work needed to be anchored in a specific location to allow for ease of access to potential narrators and source documents; and to take into account the time and cost of managing such a large undertaking.

Closing conclusions

A key objective of this study was the search for changes in policing using the sociological concept of detraditionalisation. This required the consideration of a multiplicity of technical, sociological, and criminological trends and an interdisciplinary approach to research. The thesis confirmed that tradition is dynamic; subject to reconfiguration; can have a short life span; and consist of individual and collective experience. Detraditionalisation requires the passage of custom, habit or routine, creating something new. The vibrant nature of change within the police, with its complex associations with facets of human life, ensures that it is not static. Therefore defining the 'traditional beat bobby' is mythical and dependent on too many factors such as time, place, and context. Historians and those involved in police studies should therefore take care when labelling aspects of policing as 'traditional', unless they place the term into context. Importantly this study has gone some way to filling a void in police history in the post-war period. It adds to the understanding of the socialisation of the police, and the social history of policing.

Capturing the life stories of constables in a small borough force for the first time reveals a demarcation between older constables who joined the force in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War and those who joined in

the 1960s; reflecting changes in society and personal aspirations. Generational differences are apparent in virtually all aspects of the research findings and support the notion of changing ambitions and traditional approaches to life and work. The younger constable had a desire to expand the nature of duties performed, while older constables were more likely to accept their station, and the nature of work they did.

Autocratic management was accepted and promotions from within meant there was little scope for change in administrative or management styles. The overbearing police management stifled opportunities for constables to express individualism and their ability to use initiative and creativity and persisted until amalgamation. This mind set cocooned within the small confines of a proud, insular, self-propagating institution was resistant to change until central powers intervened. The benefits of career development were open but to a few, chosen without transparency, leading to a general feeling of favouritism. Constables needed to ensure they complied with occupational expectations both official and cultural; their faces needed to 'fit' to confirm their acceptance into the force.

Yet, detraditionalisation paved the way for providing the beat constable greater autonomy. He, and soon she, would be less conditioned by traditional borough practices and more able to develop their career. This came at the cost of moving away from an established local institution and from waning principles designed to govern behaviour and standards. However, policing still remained local in nature, and still does: Durham Constabulary's South Shields Division is coterminous with the current South Tyneside Basic Command Unit of Northumbria Police.

For all of the criticisms that could be levelled at the idiosyncratic traditions of the small borough police force, the men and women who worked in them held a great deal of pride in its institution. They performed a difficult job under testing conditions and it is easy to find many incidents of good police work, and bravery. Municipal civic pride was evident in the police force of the pre amalgamation era. As police forces developed into larger corporate business units concentrating on outputs and outcomes, it is with nostalgia

that many former police officers looked upon their experiences in ‘the Borough’.

Appendices

Appendix 1

Interview Guide 1

Complete formal consent

Biographical Information

Birth Birthplace
Fathers name, mother's maiden name, siblings
Fathers work, mothers work
Where did you live?
Education
Early employment
Any military / wartime experiences
Marriage
Children

Police initial experience

What was the view of your family and friends of the police, prior to joining?
What was your view of them?
Why did you apply to join South Shields Police?
What was the process?
What uniform and kit were you issued?
How did you feel when issued with your uniform?
How easy was the uniform to clean?
Was the uniform fit for purpose?
What did your training consist of?
How strict were supervisors during your training?
How did you feel when you first attended duty at South Shields?
What was your first task?
What were your initial thoughts about the organisation you had joined?
How did joining the police affect your relationships with friends and family?

Pay and Conditions

What were the working conditions?
How rewarding was the job financially (and otherwise)?
What was your spending power?
What shifts/hours did you work?
If you had police accommodation, how did it compare to other housing?
How regimented was your life in the police compared to being a civilian?
How well did you know the management (Inspectors and above)?
How did you address them if you met them off duty?
What was the greatest difference before and after joining the police?
How did your wife / family adapt to police life?

How did you feel about the chief constable or the watch committee?
Describe your social life as a police officer?
How did you spend your holidays?
How did conditions of service change during your time as a police officer (what were the most notable)?
How influential was the Police Federation?

Working the Beat

Where did you work the beat initially?
How did you get to work?
Describe a typical patrol briefing?
What would happen on a typical day?
How did the box and pillar system work?
Tell what happened when you had a refreshment break?
What were the social conditions like for people in South Shields (amount of cars, quality of housing, pub hours?)
To what extent was crime an issue when you worked as a constable?
Did this change?
Did you feel that society was changing? How did this manifest?
How boring could beat work be?
What was the difference between working in the summer and the winter?
How did you enforce your authority?
Were you ever assaulted, or injured?
Did you ever use your truncheon or snips?
Were there any areas considered more difficult to work than others? Why?
Did older officers work the beat in a different way to new staff?
What service functions did you perform for the public?
How were 999 calls dealt with?
Was the job crime oriented?
How were radios introduced?
What other technical changes can you recall in your service?
What difference to your working routine did radios make?
Were you ever under pressure to have returns (rates of arrest, summons etc.)?
What was the most enjoyable aspect of working a beat?
What was the most disagreeable?

Interview Guide 2

Dealing with Specific Incidents

What specialist support was available to you to deal with incidents (crime; road accidents; the river and sea; sexual offences; firearms?)
What transport was available to you?
How did road traffic affect policing?
Did South Shields present specific issues for policing such as the River, Arab community, mines, shipyards etc.?
Was there a youth culture – how did it affect your duties?
What was the role of policewomen, how did you utilise them?
Describe the process of making an arrest?
How did you make up your notebook?
What was the process for being called to court and giving evidence?
Were there any special events to police?
(Royal visits; fair ground; parades, football matches; New Year's Eve)

Discipline

What was the kind of disciplinary offences that you tried hard to avoid?
How pedantic was the discipline?
Was discipline of this kind needed?
How did you escape from the routine of the beat?
Were there any serious breaches of discipline at South Shields whilst you worked there?
If someone wanted to make a complaint about the police what happened?
Who ultimately had the say on hire or fire?
How effective was the Police Federation in assisting with disciplinary matters?
How easy was it for Sergeants and others to bully the staff?

Perks of the Job

How did people show their gratitude to the police?
Did you ever receive free gifts or 'perks' of the job?
How common was it to have a pint on duty?
Was this abused by anyone?
What was the procedure for getting a pint whilst on duty?
Were the public aware of this?
To what extent do you think the public looked up to the police?

Promotion and Specialism

What was the process for gaining promotion?
How influential were managers / watch committee in the selection of those to be promoted?
What opportunities were open for staff development?
What routes were available for specialisation?

Concluding Questions

What was your opinion of the county police?
Was there a good relationship?
What were the greatest changes you noticed during your service?
What technological advances were there?
Did the expectations of the 'bosses' change?
Was the role stressful; did this change as your service progressed?
How did you feel when the force amalgamated with Durham?
Why did you leave the force?
What happened when you left?
Tell me about the most serious incident you were involved in as a constable?
What was the saddest incident that you can recall?
What was the funniest thing that happened?

Appendix 2

Shields Gazette 10 March 2010. Article to recruit participants to oral history project.

For more
Cookson Country, visit
www.shieldsgazette.com

Cookson Country

with Janis Blower

On the beat down memory lane

Factfile

SOUTH BOWEN BOWEN Police was the first to arrive at the scene of the 1957 explosion. The explosion was caused by a gas leak from a gas stove. The explosion was caused by a gas leak from a gas stove. The explosion was caused by a gas leak from a gas stove.

IT'S a job that has to be kept up with the help of a lot of people. But what if it was to be left to one person? That's the challenge of the new 'beat down' memory lane project.

As a major state history project which will be the first of its kind in the state, the project is a joint venture between the state and the local community.

SUPERFICIALLY it was the transition from the old to the new. It was the transition from the old to the new. It was the transition from the old to the new.

It was the transition from the old to the new. It was the transition from the old to the new. It was the transition from the old to the new.

CALL IN If you have a story to tell, call in to the project. The project is a joint venture between the state and the local community.

STANDING TO ATTENTION - a pre-war police inspection of Shields. The project is a joint venture between the state and the local community.

45 Years Ago A former Cookson City police officer, who was the first to arrive at the scene of the 1957 explosion, is now a member of the project.


FOOTPRINT - Z Cars changed the project. The project is a joint venture between the state and the local community.

HEADQUARTERS - South Shields police station in Upper Street in 1957. The project is a joint venture between the state and the local community.

HEAVY DUTY - a snapshot of the project. The project is a joint venture between the state and the local community.

Appendix 3


Recruitment poster.



***‘South Shields Borough Police’
Oral History Project***

Were you a Police Officer, Traffic Warden, Special Constable or Employee of the South Shields Borough Police Force up to 1969? If so you can contribute to this project by providing your memories in an audio recorded interview. The interviews will be preserved and used as part of a police history research project at Teesside University and housed by the Beamish Museum.

To find out more contact Email policehistory@tees.ac.uk
Or Telephone 07508 115400
Or leave your details with South Shields Local Studies Library, at the Central Library in South Shields..

 Teesside University
Teesside University is sponsoring this project for the purposes of research generation.

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Narrator	Final Police Rank	Year of Appointment	Number of Interviews	Total Length of Interview
AD	Constable	1963	2	2h 25m
AJ	Constable	1954	3	2h 02m
AR	Sergeant	1964	2	2h 14m
BA	Constable	1951	3	3h 22m
BO	Superintendent	1963	1	2h 20m
BS	(F) Sergeant	1967	1	1h 43m
CA	Superintendent	1964	2	2h 32m
DH	Sergeant	1947	2	2h 23m
ER	Constable	1965	2	2h 27m
ELP	Sergeant	1962	2	2h 35m
FG	Constable	1947	1	1h 12m
FD	Chief Inspector	1952	3	2h 49m
GG	Inspector	1956	2	2h 06m
GH	Sergeant	1963	3	1h 50m
GT	Inspector	1964	2	2h 08
JB	Superintendent	1960	3	3h 10m
JC	Constable	1957	2	2h 31m
JH	Inspector	1951	2	2h 39m
JW	(F) Inspector	1955	1	1h 29m
KR	Sergeant	1959	1	2h 16m
LB	Special Constable	1964	1	0h 55m
LS	Sergeant	1963	2	1h 58m
MA	(F) Constable	1959	1	1h 18m
NB	Constable	1947	3	3h 11m
OC	Sergeant	1959	2	2h 14m
PL	Inspector	1965	2	2h 00m
RB	A / Chief Superintendent	1962	1	1h 35m
RF	Sergeant	1960	2	1h 57m
SB	Chief Inspector	1965	2	1h 59m
TF	Constable	1964	1	1h 28m
TKW	Sergeant	1948	2	2h 16m
TP	Constable	1965	2	1h 54m
TR	Constable	1966	2	2h 36m
WR	Constable	1955	2	2h 23m
Sub-total	34		65	73h 57m

Oral history interviews May 1994

Narrator	Final Police Rank	Year of Appointment	Number of Interviews
CW	Constable	1959	1
SB	Chief Inspector	1965	1
MH	(F) Constable	1965	1
Total Narrators and interviews	36		68

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Unused Material



***‘South Shields Borough Police’
Oral History Project***

***Information for participants about the project,
frequently asked questions,
copyright and consent forms.***

 Teesside University

Teesside University is sponsoring
this project for the purposes of
research governance

'There is history in all men's lives.'

William Shakespeare

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South Shields Borough Police Oral History Project

Information for Participants

Consent and Copyright

Forms are available in larger font size if required

Index Number.....

Introduction

This leaflet provides information about the 'South Shields Borough Police Oral History Project' and how you can contribute to it.

You are invited to take part in the project, which is being conducted by Kevin Rigg for a PhD thesis under the supervision of Dr Margaret Williamson in the School of Arts and Media at Teesside University.

The project intends to capture the experiences of former South Shields Borough Police Constables and staff and to create a historical record that will be housed at Beamish Museum. The life stories of those interviewed will be available to the public for posterity.

I understand that you worked for the police in South Shields between 1948 and 1969; therefore, this information has been forwarded to you as a potential candidate to participate in an interview.

As well as providing information, the leaflet contains a variety of forms for me to complete with you. I will ensure that any concerns or questions you have are answered prior to any commitment you may give.

I hope you consent to take part in this project and I look forward to working with you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kevin Rigg." The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped 'K' and a trailing dot at the end.

Kevin Rigg

South Shields Borough Police

There is no published comprehensive historical account of South Shields Borough Police Force. The best available account comes from 'A History of the South Shields Police' written by Thomas Barnes (the last chief constable of the force) when completing a leadership course at the Police College at Ryton-on-Dunsmore. This was stored with the National Police Library at Bramshill when South Shields Borough Police amalgamated with Durham Constabulary in 1968.

There are other documents available to researchers such as Watch Committee Meeting Minutes, Chief Constables' Reports and Inspection Reports. However, these tend to be written for a particular audience, they do not capture the day-to-day activities of the men and women who provided the policing service. They do not present the experiences, concerns, difficulties and challenges that faced the constable on a daily basis.

Between 1845 and 1968, no more than 1019 constables were appointed to the South Shields Borough Police Force. Less than one in three of these were to see full retirement as a police officer, many left the job for a variety of reasons, some were dismissed and others retired due to ill health, died or were killed on duty.

The period between 1948 and 1968 introduced particular challenges for society. This was a time that saw new housing estates built, the emergence of a youth sub-culture from 'Teddy Boys' to 'Mods and Rockers' and 'Hippies' to 'Skinheads'. There was an increase in crime (nationally) as well as a boom in consumer goods such as motor vehicles and telephones. These brought challenges to the police who were moving from a traditional foot beat system to a more mobile style of patrol, governed by the radio rather than the call of the police box. Various changes in police pay and conditions took place; this was a time of significant change for those providing a policing service.

This project will aim to capture the experiences of those police constables, how did they cope with change, did they see their role changing, what issues did an ordinary shift present, were the changes experienced all for the good?

Whilst constables may have engaged in some activities frowned upon (e.g. drinking on duty) many acts of bravery, good police work and personal effort were delivered by the constable that never received acknowledgement. This project will offer the opportunity to place on record the personal testimony and histories of those constables and employees who served the community of South Shields.

What is Oral History?

It is a way of ensuring that an audio recording captures your memories and experiences. It is an established method of researching history and can fill the gaps that official documents tend to ignore. Importantly it can provide a personal insight to a subject whilst also capturing personal knowledge and experience.

What is this project about?

This project aims to research the way that constables in South Shields managed their role during a time of significant social and cultural change from 1948-1968. It aims to record the way that a policing service was delivered in the post-war period.

Who is doing the research?

Kevin Rigg, the researcher, retired after 30 years service from Northumbria Police in 2007. He has studied history at the University of Sunderland and Criminal Justice at the University of Portsmouth. He is currently a research student with Teesside University completing a PhD. Teesside University is providing the governance and support for this research.

Where did you get my name?

You will have volunteered for this project either by responding to a recruitment drive with the South Tyneside branch of the National Association of Retired Police Officers, or by responding to publicity in the local press or library. A friend or former colleague who feels that you would be able to contribute to the project may have provided your name.

Where will interviews be recorded?

Interviews are usually held in the comfort and security of your own home. Although a different venue can be arranged, should you prefer.

What is the procedure for the Oral History Interview?

The interview may take approximately 2 periods of up to 90 minutes or one period of 2 hours. The process is very flexible, and allows you to express freely your story with topics being prompted by the researcher.

During the interview, you will be asked to recall your experience about the recruitment process, conditions of service, training, uniform and equipment used, pay and housing.

Further topics will be on the subjects of exerting authority, the day-to-day management of a beat, the changes that you experienced during your service, discipline, perks of the job, parts of the job you enjoyed and those you did not.

The interview will be digitally recorded and transcribed. The results of your interview will be stored and archived by Beamish Museum, for public use. It will be utilised by Kevin Rigg as part of a PhD thesis examining the changes to policing in South Shields between 1948 and 1968 and may be used in other publications.

What are the risks / benefits to this interview?

The risks associated with participation in this interview are minimal. However, you may when interviewed, recall events that were stressful or caused you anxiety at the time. There is a risk that such recall may cause you to 'relive' the incident; you should not place yourself at such risk merely for the gain of the researcher.

You should also be aware of saying anything that could cause defamation or libel e.g. accusations or opinions about those you worked with or dealt with as offenders.

If you were involved with secret or intelligence based issues (e.g. terrorism) whilst a police officer, these should not be disclosed.

There are no direct benefits to you from participation, but your willingness to share your knowledge and experiences will contribute to the development of Police History, will add to the recorded local history of South Shields and it will ensure that your memories and experiences are captured for others to share.

How confidential is the process?

Unless you request anonymity, your name will be referenced in the transcript and recording as well as in any material generated as a result of this research. If you request anonymity, the recording of your name in the interview will be closed to public use, and your name will not appear in the transcript or referenced in any material obtained from the interview.

In addition, at the conclusion of the interview you will be asked to sign a "Copyright Assignment Form" to donate the transcript and recording of the interview to Beamish Museum and Kevin Rigg. The materials from your interview will remain the property of Beamish Museum and Kevin Rigg and will be available for use by others.

Under no circumstances will your contact details be made available to anyone outside the remit of this project without your express consent. All personal data will be held securely.

Will this be a voluntary interview?

Your participation in this interview is voluntary. Even if you decide to participate, you may withdraw from the interview without penalty, or request confidentiality, at any point during the interview.

You may also choose not to answer specific questions or discuss certain subjects during the interview or to ask that portions of our discussion or your responses not be recorded on tape.

Can I donate photographs or other items of historical interest to the project?

Should you wish to donate items, Kevin Rigg, will make enquiries, on your behalf, to establish if there is a suitable place to house the donation. There will be a form to complete. Please note:

- We cannot accept donations without transfer of title
- We cannot accept material for which the donor does not have clear title
- We cannot provide appraisals of the monetary value of gifts
- We cannot accept liability for loss or damage of materials due to deterioration, fire or other natural disaster

In the event that a suitable repository cannot be found for the items (e.g. Tyne and Wear Museums, Beamish Museum or Police History Society) the items will be retained by you.

Should you wish you can consent to your current photograph and (should you possess one) a photograph when you were a constable to accompany your oral testimony.

Copies of any photographs you may wish to contribute will be taken and the original returned to you.

What if I have other questions to ask about the project?

Kevin Rigg will provide you with a telephone number and an E-mail address so that he can answer any of your questions.

Kevin will also discuss with you any concerns you may have; prior to any recorded interview to ensure you are fully aware of the interview process.

You can also contact:

Dr Margaret Williamson,
School of Arts and Media,
Teesside University, Middlesbrough,
TS1 3BA,
01642 384073.

Consent to be Interviewed

Statement of Consent:

I agree to participate in this oral history interview, and to the use of this interview as described above. My preference regarding the use of my name is as follows:

***I agree to be identified by name in any transcript or reference to the information contained in this interview.**

***I agree to the provision of my photograph to accompany the oral recording.**

***I wish to remain anonymous in any transcript or reference to the information contained in this interview.**

Participant's Signature

Date

Researcher's Signature

Date

*(delete as necessary)

Biographical Information

Name

Maiden Name

Address

Telephone Number

E-mail address

Birth Place

Birth Date and Year

Spouse or Closest Living Relative

Biographical Information

Completed by

Date

Interview Information Form (1)

Date of interview

Place of interview

Start time

Length of interview

Restrictions

Transcript reviewed yes/no

Date

Interview Information Form (2)

Date of Interview

Place of interview

Start time

Length of interview

Restrictions

Transcript reviewed yes/no

Date

COPYRIGHT ASSIGNMENT & CONSENT FORM FOR 'SOUTH SHIELDS BOROUGH POLICE ORAL HISTORY PROJECT'

The purpose of this assignment and consent is to enable Beamish Museum and Kevin Rigg to permanently retain and use the recorded recollections of individuals. In respect of the content of a sound recording made by and / or, being deposited with Beamish Museum and Kevin Rigg, consisting of the recollections of a contributor and constituting a literary work as defined by the Copyright, Designs & Patents Act 1988:

As present owner of the copyright in the contributor content (i.e. the words spoken by the interviewee), I hereby assign such copyright to Beamish Museum and Kevin Rigg. I hereby waive any moral rights, which I presently own in relation to this work on the understanding that the content will not be used in a derogatory manner and that the author of the contribution will be correctly identified in all uses of it*.

I understand that no payment is due to me for this assignment and consent. In assigning my copyright, I understand that I am giving Beamish Museum and Kevin Rigg the right to use and make available the content of the recorded interview for example in the following ways:

- use in schools, universities, colleges and other educational establishments, including use in a thesis, dissertation or similar research
- public performance, lectures or talks
- use in publications, including print, audio or video cassettes or CD ROM
- public reference purposes in libraries, museums & record offices
- use on radio or television
- publication worldwide on the internet
- In any methods of public access developed in future technology

I do*/do not [DELETE WHICHEVER DOES NOT APPLY] wish to place restrictions on access to or use of the recording and transcript of the interview.

* I wish to impose the following restrictions on access to or use of (the whole or part of) the recording and/or transcript of the interview:

1st Interview Signed:

Date:

(Print name):

2nd Interview Signed:

Date

Artefact Inventory Form

Item	Description	Notes

I (Print Name) donate and transfer all
rights of ownership of the above items to (Name of Institution)

--

to be housed and archived by them. I agree to any copied photographs being used
by Kevin Rigg and entered into the Beamish Museum Photographic Archive.

Signed:

Date:

Thank you for your participation.

**If you know of anyone who could contribute to this project,
please pass on my contact details to them.**

Contact Details

Kevin Rigg

Email: Policehistory@tees.ac.uk

Telephone: 07508 115400

**Address: Research Office,
 School of Arts and Media,
 Teesside University,
 Middlesbrough,
 TS1 3BA.**